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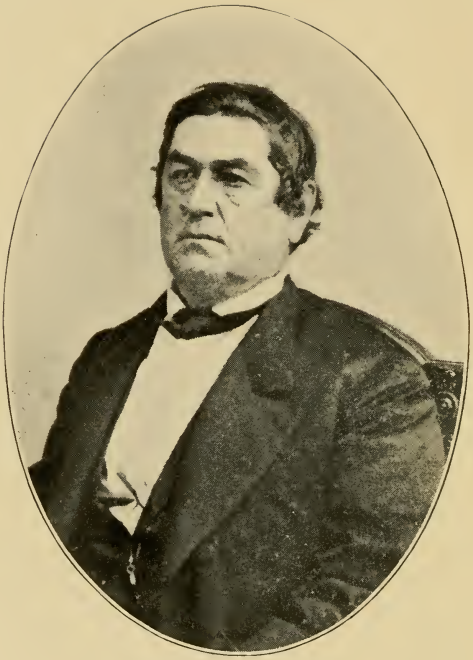

ROBERT M. T. HUNTER.

A MEMOIR

OF

ROBERT M. T. HUNTER

BY

MARTHA T. HUNTER
(His Daughter)

WITH AN

ADDRESS ON HIS LIFE

(Prepared for the Hunter Monument Association)

BY

COL. L. QUINTON WASHINGTON

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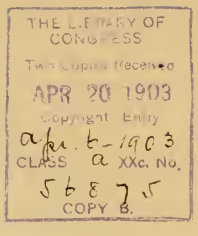

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PREFACE.

IN preparing this biographical sketch of the late Robert M. T. Hunter, my chief endeavor has been to collect data and afford facilities for gathering information for a future writer. Acting as a pioneer in rendering accessible such facts as may be necessary for the compilation of a complete memoir, I leave to a more competent judgment and more skilful performance to bring shape out of chaos, and, while using effective material, to reject what is worthless.

Mr. Hunter's political career will not be followed in detail, and only such dates and references will be furnished as may be hereafter needed by a biographer to describe the leading events and mark the most noteworthy acts and speeches of his public life.

In writing this memorial, I have been much assisted by the valuable and admirable biographical sketch written for the *Richmond Dispatch,* of December 13, 1891, by Mr. Hunter's friend and kinsman, Mr. A. R. Micou.

INTRODUCTION TO MR. MICOU'S SKETCH.

[A. R. Micou in *Richmond Dispatch,* Dec. 13, 1891.]

The movement inaugurated to remove the remains of the late Hon. R. M. T. Hunter to some point near Richmond, and to erect an appropriate monument to his memory, will recall to many who have passed the meridian of life the exciting political contests of the three decades from 1830 to 1860, when Whig and Democrat struggled for supremacy in the State and Federal governments; when the hustings was the arena upon which the intellectual gladiators of each party met in fierce yet courteous debate, giving thrust for thrust and blow for blow.

These battles were waged with varying fortunes, sometimes one champion and sometimes another winning the favor of the people, who turned out almost *en masse* to attend these forensic displays, the adherents of each in turn cheering themselves hoarse when some telling point was made by their favorite leader, and at another were hushed into silence by the magic power of their eloquence. In those days every Virginian was a politician, and every measure, State and Federal, was fully

discussed upon the hustings, which was the great medium through which the people were informed upon public affairs. But few of the present generation, except such as have been students of history, will recall any memory of the questions which were discussed, or the history of the leaders of public opinion, and to many even the names of these intellectual giants are unknown. It may be not untimely, therefore, nor without interest to your readers, to give a brief sketch of the life and services of one who was an active participant in those contests, and who for more than twenty-five years was ranged on one side or the other of every important public question which divided the parties; who, after two terms of service in the State Legislature, served eight years in the House of Representatives, and by successive re-elections was for thirteen years a Senator of the United States, and subsequently held high positions under the short-lived government of the Confederate States, so that any who are unfamiliar with his career may better appreciate the motives of those who now seek to pay this tribute to his memory.

ANCESTRY.

Robert Mercer Taliaferro Hunter was born in Essex County, Va., April 21, 1809. His

father, James Hunter, was a landed proprietor of considerable means and high standing in the community, and his mother, Maria Garnett, the daughter of Muscoe Garnett and Grace Fenton Garnett, née Mercer, was of the distinguished family of Mercers, of which the late Hon. Charles Fenton Mercer, the well-known philanthropist and a member of Congress from this State from 1817 to 1840, was one of the most prominent. So many of his family being in public life, the mind of the subject of this sketch was naturally turned to the study of current politics and the science of government. History and biography were always his favorite studies, but such was the activity of his mind, the comprehensiveness of his intellect and the retentiveness of his memory, that there were few fields of learning that he did not invade, and fewer still were the subjects that he touched and did not thoroughly master.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND ANCESTRY.

Robert Mercer Taliaferro Hunter, the subject of this memoir, was born on the twenty-first of April, 1809, in Essex County, Virginia, at the home of his maternal grandparents.

This beautiful residence, fitly called Mt. Pleasant, was long the Garnett Homestead, and is worthy of detailed description.

The large brick mansion stood on the summit of the lofty range of hills overlooking the valley of the Rappahannock, and was built about 1734, on a large landed estate embracing thousands of acres. The condition of the country did not admit of much artistic development of the grounds, but Nature had richly endowed the situation. The hills, running parallel with the river, were broken and diversified by deep and irregular valleys and ravines, the sides of which were covered with the varied and magnificent forest growth of the country. Oak, poplar, beech and hickory were densely enveloped with the almost tropical luxuriance of the wild grape and indigenous creepers. Winding its broad and tortuous course through the immense and fertile valley, stretching from the foot of the

range to its banks, the Rappahannock was visible for many miles, and across its glittering waters lay the wide plains of Westmoreland County, extending back to the elevated and forest-clad spine of the Northern Neck of Virginia. Here amid these fair surroundings, Muscoe Garnett, the maternal grandfather of Robert Hunter, lived with his family. He had married Grace Fenton Mercer, the daughter of John Mercer, of Marlborough, in Stafford County, Virginia, and seven children survived him. His five sons were James Mercer, John Mercer, Muscoe and William (twins), and Robert Selden Garnett, and his two daughters were Maria and Fenton.

Each of the sons inherited fine estates:

James M. Garnett, the eldest son, owned Elmwood, one of the handsomest residences in Virginia, situated on a range of hills opposite to the Mt. Pleasant estate.

John Mercer Garnett received the old homestead as his portion, and Muscoe owned Prospect Hill, a beautiful place adjoining Elmwood, while William and the youngest son, Robert, inherited adjoining estates lower down in the County of Essex, one called Rose Hill and the other Champlain.

The eldest daughter, Maria Garnett, married her cousin, James Hunter, the father of R. M. T. Hunter, and her sister, Grace Fenton, married James's younger brother, Muscoe Garnett Hunter, her father's namesake, so that the families were very closely allied.

Robert Hunter's mother was remarkable for her intellectual powers and strength of character, and early developed a strong love for literature and desire for knowledge. At a period when women generally were not at all addicted to literary pursuits, she studied mathematics for her own pleasure, and sold a highly prized gold watch to purchase books. Her mind was clear and logical, and tradition ascribes the conversion of a clever infidel to Christianity to the force of her arguments. This may not, however, be vouched for as an historical fact.

Two of her brothers, the Hon. James Mercer Garnett and Hon. Robert Selden Garnett, ably represented in the House of Representatives the district of which Essex formed a part—the former for two and the latter for five terms. James M. Garnett was a prominent writer on ethical and agricultural subjects.

The paternal ancestors of Robert Hunter for three preceding generations were merchants of

high standing in the social and business world. The family were of Scotch descent. An ancestor named James, the great-grandfather of James Hunter, of Hunter's Hill, who was Robert's father, was born in the town of Dunse, Scotland, in 1661, and the family had amassed a considerable property in the course of long and extensive commercial transactions on both sides of the Atlantic. Robert Hunter's father, however, succeeded to such exhausted finances that during his earlier life his natural energy and strength of character were taxed to the utmost to etablish any degree of material prosperity. His father, William Hunter, was one of four children, of whom the first, a girl named Mary, died in infancy. James, the second child, became a prosperous merchant in Fredericksburg, Virginia, and afterwards in Portsmouth of the same State. He married the widow of his cousin, Mrs. Mariana Hunter, the daughter of a wealthy Englishman named Spence. William, the grandfather of Robert M. T. Hunter, came next, and, last of the four, a daughter called Martha.

William Hunter married Sarah, a daughter of William and Anne Garnett, who lived at The Stone Chimney, in Essex County, Virginia, on the estate afterwards called Cham-

plain. Mrs. Garnett, née Rouzie or Rowzee, had married William, a half-brother of Muscoe Garnett of Mt. Pleasant, but she was a widow at the time of her daughter Sarah's marriage. Her wealthy brother-in-law seems to have aided her and his brother's children, but at his father's death in 1787 or 1788, the young James, a lad of fourteen, was sent to Portsmouth to begin life under the auspices of his Uncle James, after whom he was named. His brother, William Garnett Hunter, after causing his mother much anxiety, disappeared some years later, and his fate was never accurately known. In a letter to her husband's brother in Portsmouth, written in July, 1788, from Essex County, Virginia, the widowed mother mentions her two eldest boys in the following extract:

I have no one to take care of my children, and have a disagreeable time of it, and I believe there is no happiness for me in this world. God only knows the trials I have to go through, and if it were not for my Uncle Garnett's[1] kindness to me and my children, I never should be in spirits to keep up. You may believe me, my dear brother, he is the only friend I have near me that is worth mentioning, and he is a father to your brother's children, and will do everything in his power for them. * * * As to

[1]Muscoe Garnett.

James's[1] going with Mr. Nickolls, I have no objection, if he has the smallpox before he goes. I know my dear brother is the best judge of what is for his good. I shall mention it to my Uncle Garnett when next I see him. I believe it will be agreeable to him if Mr. Nickolls will bear James's expenses, as I fear my uncle will not have it in his power to advance the money for him, as there are so many demands against the estate. I beg Mr. Nickolls will let James come up at Christmas to see me before he goes. I hope Mr. Nickolls will be a good friend to Jimmy; it is all the satisfaction I have to hear he is such a good boy.

Billy is now at home with me, and he goes to school every day to learn to cypher. My dear brother, if you can get a place for him in Norfolk or Portsmouth, I hope you will. He says he will be as attentive to his business as possible, and it never will do for him to stay here, as it is impossible for him to improve himself in anything whatever, from the company he must keep, if here he is obliged to stay; indeed, I had rather he was in his grave than to keep company with such idle, worthless young men that are about this place. I write my mind freely to you, my dear brother, and I write many things that I don't wish to be mentioned. I shall be happy to see Mr. Spence[2] and his lady whenever they visit me.

---

[1]R. M. T. Hunter's father.

[2]Father of Mrs. James Hunter.

The boys are gone to school. Patsy sends her duty to her uncle and aunt, and love to her cousins. God bless you all, my dear brother, and believe me to be,

Your aff'ate sister,

SALLY HUNTER.

I wrote James last week, expecting Captain Livingstone would go down, but he was disappointed.

This pathetic letter veils the maternal anxiety which the writer strives to repress in consenting to her boy's voyage to the West Indies, whither, soon after his arrival in Norfolk, he was sent as supercargo. James Hunter was born March 14, 1774, and at the time of his mother's letter was only fourteen years old. Besides his elder brother William, already mentioned, there were Taliaferro, born July 26th, 1776; Martha Taliaferro, born February 22, 1778; Muscoe Garnett, born April 7, 1779, and Henry Garnett, born February 25, 1783. This last child must have died early, as there is no further mention of him.

James Hunter possessed strength of mind and will, with indomitable energy of character, which enabled him through life to withstand danger and difficulty. He early developed such promise of business ability that his uncle James adopted him as his special protegé, and took him to Portsmouth to introduce him to

the firm of which he was a member. The tradition is that while on this, his first voyage, a storm arose threatening the vessel's destruction on the Chesapeake Bay. His uncle, noticing symptoms of alarm in the boy, addressed him in forcible language: "Why, you d——d little rascal, what is the matter? Are you afraid to die?"

The child replied that he was not, and determined to overcome all dread of danger by sea, on which resolve he had afterward abundant cause to congratulate himself. He was more than once sent on sea voyages by his employers, who trusted and highly esteemed him, teaching him early self-reliance, by the weight of responsibility. He had a boyish appreciation of fun, and used to enjoy telling a joke perpetrated on some Englishmen, who had come to Portsmouth to explore the surrounding lands, with a view to settlement. James was sent by his employers to drive with these gentlemen through the adjacent country and show its advantages. After investigating the condition of crops and fruits, one of the explorers asked about a persimmon tree, on which the fruit was green. In answer to his inquiry whether this fruit was good to eat, the young guide assured him of its excellence, and

standing at a safe distance, watched his victim as he pulled and tasted the green persimmon. In another moment he was flying before an enraged pursuer, whose face was puckered and drawn by the crude fruit. Although so young, James understood how to protect himself from insult or oppression, as was proved on his first sea voyage.

There was a barbarous ordeal to which the young mariner was in those days exposed on first crossing the Line," very similar to the "hazing" since practiced in colleges on freshmen. To prevent this initiation, it was customary to pay a fee to the captain of the vessel, with which he might bribe his men to abstain from aggression, and young James accordingly offered this sum to insure his protection from the sailors. The captain refused the money, saying that he could not prevent the initiation by any means in his power; "But," said he, "I have two pistols here, as good firearms as ever smoked, and if you defend yourself by shooting two of the seamen, you may escape the ordeal. I think killing them would be justifiable under the circumstances."

Young Hunter took the pistols, and his threats were so effective that he escaped the rigors of initiation without drawing any blood.

We have no exact record of the time spent with the Portsmouth firm, during which he gained honor and respect, but eight years after the above-mentioned incidents he was living at Laytons, in his native County of Essex, and on the 21st of September, 1796, he married his cousin, Maria Garnett, the daughter of his great-uncle, Muscoe Garnett of Mt. Pleasant. This gentleman, after the death of his niece, Mrs. Sally Hunter, seems to have exercised some supervision over her orphan children, taking her daughter Maria, or "Patsy," as she was called, to live with him, but having much on his hands, he deputed the management of their property to an agent, who had little to show for his trust when called to render an account.

James Hunter opened a store at Laytons, with such wreck of property as he could recover, and in spite of his extreme youth acted almost a father's part to his two younger brothers. His only sister, to whom he was deeply attached, always lived with him after he had a home of his own, and was beloved and honored by his family. A devoted friendship existed between this lady and Maria Garnett, with whom she had lived as a sister at Mt.

Pleasant, and whose fullest confidence she always possessed. Muscoe Garnett was said to have been opposed to his daughter's marrying her young kinsman, who at twenty-two years of age had very scanty means of support, and the following letter written to her lover by Maria Garnett shows that the course of their true love did not run with absolute smoothness. Beneath the somewhat stilted and romantic style of her age and generation we read between the lines and detect the genuine warmth of a first love. The epistle is dated July 28, 1795, and has no address, but may have been enclosed with the letter of some other person. It enters at once on the subject of some misunderstanding:

How could you so much misunderstand advice, dictated by the most anxious solicitude for your welfare, as to suppose it was meant merely as an evasion of a promise which I have no longer any inclination to perform. Hitherto I have forborne to make professions, because I thought from my former conduct you must be so sensible of the extravagance of my attachment that I was in danger of owing those sentiments to compulsion, which I wish to be the result of esteem. Everything which has appeared capricious in my behaviour has originated in the singular character of my father; candidly speaking, I am certain that he is as willing to my marrying you as any

man in the world, but he has strong objections to matrimony, and, from a strange peculiarity, will never give a positive answer to anything. Well as I am acquainted with this, did not common justice demand the answer returned to you? The part I have had to act has been very difficult—too difficult for my judgment. On every side I have been entangled by perplexities, from which I knew not how to extricate myself. In this situation, I resolved to conceal every sensation under the mask of gaiety, and since this resolution,—merry, grave or sad,—have worn the same smiling aspect. In pursuance of these rules, I have sometimes so far overacted my part, that the affectation has been detected. I have disregarded my own difficulties, but have felt more severely for the trouble and vexation the matter has cost you than for any circumstance that has occurred during the whole transaction. Do not suppose that I have been so explicit in declaring my affection with a view of weakening the force of the request I made by your sister this morning.

On the contrary, I earnestly and sincerely wish you to comply with it at all events. I merely mean the declaration for your satisfaction, if you have not yourself cooled, and if you have, for my own justification. I must now conclude by assuring you that your happiness has long been, and will ever remain, the dearest wish of my heart, and however the affair may end, if that favorite wish is granted I shall not be unhappy.

M. Garnett.

So wrote a girl of eighteen, a hundred years ago, and the affair ended according to the

wishes of the young couple, as this marriage took place little more than a year later. For the first five years afterwards, they lived at Laytons', where James Hunter engaged in mercantile pursuits until he removed to Hunter's Mill, where he devoted himself to farming and to the care of the mill which he purchased. He was elected to the State Legislature, and served two terms, being unanimously chosen the second time without soliciting the vote of the people. He was very fond of reading, and his marked literary tastes impressed themselves on his children. His son Robert said that his father slept badly, and would often call him up at night between one and two o'clock to read aloud some historical or biographical work. This untimely pursuit of literature would have acted on some childish minds as a deterrent rather than a stimulus, but the love of reading, so early inculcated, was a lifelong resource to the subject of this sketch. James Hunter said that his high value for education was enhanced by his own difficulties in attaining it. He owed his mental culture entirely to his own efforts, for he was forced into active life too early to have had any regular education. He took a prominent position in his native county, which was due to his force of

character, his clear judgment and superior practical ability.

His estate prospered and he was regarded as a man of such integrity and business talent that many of his neighbors sought his advice and counsel. His views of honor were rigidly scrupulous, and he believed in adhering to a high standard of truth in word and deed. His affections were as warm as his temper was quick, and he often regretted hasty words and actions, prompted by passionate impulses. Eight children were born to him from his first marriage, five sons and three daughters—Maria, Muscoe Garnett, Martha Fenton, James, Jane Swann, William, Robert Mercer Taliaferro and another, William Garnett, whose birth cost the life of his mother on the 14th of August, 1811. The first William, a boy of four or five, died at the same time, and the infant was called by his brother's name.

In 1819, James Hunter again married, and his second wife, Apphia Bushrod Rouzie, was also his cousin, but more distantly related than Maria Garnett. This lady died in February, 1822, two weeks after the birth of her first child, Sarah Harriet Apphia, whom she left to the joint guardianship of her husband's sister and his daughter Jane, whose remarkable

character fitted her for the charge. This latest born child, Sally Hunter, lived to be a comfort and blessing to her whole family and connection. Of the nine children, six survived their father, but he lived to mourn the death of his eldest boy, Muscoe Garnett Hunter, the pride and hope of the family, who died at eighteen while a student at William and Mary College, where his popular and genial disposition had endeared him both to the professors and his fellow students. They seemed to feel a generous pride in his early promise. The second son, James, also died early from typhoid fever, and the death of the first William has already been mentioned. James Hunter's first-born child, his daughter Maria, well endowed with personal and mental gifts, married her cousin, James Mercer Garnett, Junior, the eldest son of her Uncle James, to whom we have before referred. This young man, who died early, was exceptionally gifted, and some of his fellow students compared him to the "Admirable Crichton," from his varied and brilliant faculties. The only child of this marriage was Muscoe Russell Hunter Garnett, the beloved nephew of R. M. T. Hunter, who regarded him almost as a favorite son, while his rare abilities and ripe scholarship gained general

recognition in his wide circle of acquaintances. Mr. Hunter often mentioned with pride the high encomium of a distinguished Englishman, who, after meeting Muscoe Garnett, told his uncle that he had not seen his equal in America in literary accomplishments and varied attainments, and that he might be favorably compared with the best qualified graduates of Oxford and Cambridge. Mr. Hunter's other sisters were Martha Fenton and Jane S. Hunter, both older than himself, and the half-sister, Sally, who was little more than an infant when her father died in 1826.

At this time, before he was seventeen, Robert Hunter was left at the head of a large family, each with strong individual traits, although all united in affection for him, and in respect for his judgment and abilities.

But before proceeding with the narrative of his life at this period, we must give some account of Robert Hunter's childhood and its surroundings.

CHAPTER II.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH—1809-1827.

Even in childhood Robert Hunter was unusually grave and thoughtful, and his colored nurse said that he was not like other children, but always fond of books, and "lonesome in his ways." His father's love of reading, as we have said, fostered the boy's natural literary tastes, and led him to grapple with works of history and biography far beyond his years. When very young he was a martyr to ear-ache, by which his hearing was affected, and when suffering from pain, but anxious to restrain any expression of it, he resorted to the following device: He would turn his back on the occupants of the room, standing with his face toward the wall, and ask his aunt to sing a favorite hymn for him, "When Sorrows Encompass Me Round."

Up to his eleventh year he was educated at home by his sisters, but at that time his father, and his uncle, William Garnett, together employed a teacher, who was at liberty to take other scholars besides those of his two patrons. This gentleman lived a part of the year with one of his employers and a part with the

other, but the schoolhouse was built at Rose Hill, a distance of about two miles and a half from Hunter's Hill. To this place little Robert walked every day, attended by a colored boy called Austin.

His father gave him the choice of a riding-horse or the escort of this boy, and Robert chose the latter. Every morning the two set forth together, and Austin, after accompanying his charge to school, would go home and return for him in the afternoon. Mr. Van Vrancken, the first teacher engaged, was of German extraction, well educated, and possessed the gift of imparting knowledge, but was succeeded by a teacher so unpopular that the boys formed more than one conspiracy to burn down the schoolhouse.

These designs were fortunately not executed. Robert disliked the school very much, and owed his early education chiefly to his own efforts, assisted by his father and sisters. James Hunter, while fond of his children, was a disciplinarian, and on one occasion, when his little son had failed to arrange satisfactorily a business matter entrusted to him, he was sent back by his father on a lonely night ride of several miles to repair his mistake. No two natures could have been more dissimilar

than those of this father and son, save for the ambition and literary tastes common to both.

The father was a martinet in many things, in spite of his passionate and impulsive temperament. He was a close business man, paying the utmost attention to the minutiæ of his affairs, and carefully avoiding pecuniary liabilities. His papers attest his good management, for his receipts were kept on file, and he could never have been at a loss to find any important document or note of transaction. His friends recognized his judicial and administrative abilities, and made him a referee in financial difficulties, and years after his death a practical merchant of a later generation said that he believed from concurrent testimony that no such business man had ever lived in Essex.

His son Robert inherited a financial talent as applied to national affairs or private settlements on a large scale, but had no love of technical detail. He hated accounts and had no innate fear of debt, for his sanguine temperament led him to hope for a way out of pecuniary difficulties, and he did not share the nervous and apprehensive tendencies of his father's emotional nature. His eldest sister, who herself possessed an excitable nature, said

that Robert inherited his mother's amiability and unfailing patience. In early youth the future statesman seems to have sought companionship with those older and presumably wiser than himself, but more especially did he take counsel with the established authorities in the world of letters. Always studious and ambitious, he met with few congenial companions before his entrance into college life, but seems to have been warmly attached to his uncle, James M. Garnett, and the family at Elmwood. He felt a special affection for his cousin Nancy, the eldest daughter, who was much older than himself, but possessed rare talents and accomplishments, and was always devoted to her young cousin, whose intellect and attainments were to her a source of pride and pleasure and made them congenial companions. Elmwood was a second home to the Hunter family, who regarded this household with peculiar affection, and the young people treated each other with the love and affection of brothers and sisters. After their father's death, the family at Hunter's Hill was for a time broken up, for Robert's entrance at college had already been determined. The family circle would then consist of three sisters and their young brother, William, and most prominent and beloved of

all, their aunt and second mother, Martha Taliaferro Hunter. This lady, generally called by her nieces and nephews Aunt Patsy, had the gift of winning hearts by sympathy and affection; and her ready wit and bright temperament rendered her unusually agreeable. During her life she was the central figure in a family of remarkable gifts and traits of character. Friends and dependents loved and respected her, and the spell of her influence harmonized the most discordant elements. Her nieces and nephews not only loved her with rare devotion, but deferred to her wishes and opinions, and Robert Hunter, who was her chief favorite, never failed to respond to her affection and to consult her wishes. It was arranged that during his absence at college the family should board at Elmwood, where the eldest sister, Mrs. Maria Garnett, married to her cousin, already resided.

CHAPTER III.

STUDENT LIFE.

The college to which he should be sent was a subject of anxious discussion with Robert Hunter's father and friends. Princeton, William and Mary, and the University of Virginia, recently established, were all under consideration, and the decision, finally given in honor of the University, was a subject of much self-congratulation to Mr. Hunter in after life. He frequently expressed and proved his devotion to his *alma mater*. His father died a few months before the time appointed for his departure, but he entered the University at its first session, and was one of its first graduates, having for his associates Professor Gessner Harrison and Henry Tutwiler, his lifelong friends; and among his friends were others but little less distinguished.

Mr. Hunter was very tenacious of friendship once formed, liberal in praise, and averse to disparagement or censure of those he really liked and esteemed. Professor George Long, formerly of Trinity College, Cambridge, but at the time of young Hunter's matriculation professor of ancient languages at the University of Virginia, regarded the ambitious young

student with special favor, and a copy of *Polybius*, presented to him by Mr. Long, and inscribed with his name, is still in Mr. Hunter's library.

After two or three years at college he entered the law school of the distinguished lawyer, Judge Henry St. George Tucker, father of the late Hon. John Randolph Tucker, at Winchester, Virginia, and while a student won his lasting regard. Here, too, he first saw the lovely niece of the great jurist, then a child of ten or twelve years old, who was destined to be his wife.

The young law student wrote to his sister Maria, soon after reaching Winchester, as follows:

WINCHESTER, Nov. 3d.

My Dear Sister: [Year not given.]

I am very much surprised to learn from your letter that you have not heard from me since I left home. I wrote shortly after my arrival, and you perhaps perceived from that letter, if you have yet received it, that I was anxious to return, but I assure you I did not express half the anxiety I felt on that occasion. I verily believe that I should have posted off in a week after my arrival if I had not been ashamed to betray my fickleness. Indeed, I find myself a very child in some matters, but I am at least determined not to display it. You will readily believe that I am much better reconciled to my situation when I tell

you that William Taylor, *mon cher ami*, has arrived, and is now playing his delightful flute by my side whilst I am penning this epistle. I have been so much interrupted for several days past that I am obliged to seize this, which is the best opportunity I have had for writing, although, as Burns says, upon some occasion, I am hardly up to writing an order to a cobbler. I have had some other inducements to remain besides the one I have mentioned. I have been circulating some among the ladies since I arrived here, and have found some of them certainly more than passable in appearance. You have no idea how these mountain girls can sing.

I have neither seen nor heard anything of your friend Miss R. since my coming here, except that she was certainly to be married to the Reverend ———, who is said to be a young man of fine talents. I left your token and letter at Millwood, which is within half a mile of Dr. B.'s, where she lives, and an old gentleman who took charge of them at the office promised they should be safely delivered. The book was charged to Uncle James, as you requested, but I did not pay the money to Aunt B. as you wished, not because I forgot it, but because, like old Isaac the Jew, I felt that it rang too clear and true to be parted with. I believe, though, I should pay it now if I were to fall in with her, for although I thought of small debts all day and dreamt of debts and credits all night, as I came along, yet I have found not my courage, but my money oozing out so fast at the palms of my hands that I have been somewhat revolutionized. However, set it down in your big book until I come home at Christmas. "But how comes on

the law?" you will say. Much better, I daresay, than you suppose. I tried in in broken doses for some days, and it sat very well, I asure you, but it is still a little sedative in its influences. I believe you were all a little afraid when I left home that I would study so much here as to injure my health. I wonder what you would say now if you were to see me with my morning and evening levees, or could behold my valiant attacks upon our landlord's venison. You would readily excuse the last, if you saw the lordly haunches which I enjoy, for I am convinced that Robin Hood, had he lived to this day, would never have chosen his lair in merry Sherwood could he have wet his gray goose quill in our mountain deer. If we estimate greatness by the amount of pleasure one confers on those around him, I am sure Taylor (my landlord) must stand next to Washington and Gallatin, of all who have ever graced America.

You seemed to be terribly in the dumps when you wrote. What in the world can be the matter? Are you still troubled with those thick-coming fancies, which are worse than real evils? Or is it that you think nothing of a more lively strain would suit my morbid taste? Have all the family feuds been appeased, so that you can no longer find amusement or occupation for your energies, or are you like Alexander, repining over your victories and sighing for another family to conquer? If any of these surmises be true, you may suppose me your opponent, and tell Sister Martha, when times are dull, why you have abundant cause to be hurt with me—"hurt," I believe, is the term, for not paying the aforesaid sum as directed, and how you mean to show me (?)

that you are not afraid to speak your mind on the occasion. And now having laid you under obligations by affording you so charming a theme for conversation, I shall draw to a conclusion, and beg to be affectionately remembered to them all.

Yours affectionately,

Robt. M. T. Hunter.

P. S.—You must not be surprised if you should not hear from me again before Christmas, for if I can get half a chance I shall be too busy with visiting to think of writing anything but billet-doux, or sonnets "á la Moore."

This gay, boyish effusion, addressed to his widowed sister, Mrs. Maria Garnett, is very different from the graver letters of after years, and is almost the only one extant of those written in his early youth. There is one more written from college, probably a year or more previous to the letter quoted above.

His sister Jane seems to have censured his attendance at a horse race while he was at the University, and the young student of eighteen answers in an indignant protest, qualifying his assertion of independence, so far as his aunt was concerned, for to her he never failed in love and respect. Her letters to him were models of affection and discretion, and while holding up to him a high standard and incul-

cating noble aims, her style and expression were neither didactic nor dogmatic.

Letter to his sister Jane:

Oct. 29th, 1827.

My Dear Sister:

I was a little astonished, as you may suppose, at the arrival of your letter and the gravity with which you commence the impeachment of my late conduct in the high court of morality. I could but wonder when I began your letter what I had done to call forth your severe animadversion, and was relieved to find the matter no more than the simple-looking on at a trial of speed between two horses of some celebrity. Now on this point I differ with you *toto cælo.*

I abhor, I believe, every species of gambling as much as you do, and would be the last to engage in it in any shape, but I cannot agree that simply viewing what others bet on, is the same as betting myself. I acknowledge the force of example, and the duty which this imposes on all who love morality to abstain from lending its aid to immoral practices, but this is not a case in point. The purses had been made up and would have been run for, if none but the jockeys themselves had been present, so that my absence, or that indeed of all the spectators, would not have prevented the race, and I cannot consider myself as having encouraged racing by my presence.

With regard to the by-bets and dissipation that sometimes attend these places, I can only say that so far as example goes, mine went to discourage them for I did not engage in anything of the sort. Indeed, I daresay I was only discharging a duty which

others neglect, for if more of those who do not engage in immoral practices were to go, their example would have much more effect in checking vice than when abstaining from appearing at them at all. If we were to avoid everything which involves temptation, we should neither enjoy pleasure nor discharge our duties. It would be arguing quite as well to say that it is wrong ever to visit a tavern, because gambling is generally carried on at them, and if nobody went to them, there would be nobody to play.

A certain degree of amusement is as necessary for our existence and the full performance of the task which is set for us in life, as the discharge of almost any other duty we have, and as some dissipation always attends public meetings or large assemblages of every sort, and from the nature of things it is impossible to put down these last, the most natural conclusion would be that the good ought to make the presence of the bad, which cannot be avoided, as little deleterious as possible. Thus it is that I acquit myself of all guilt in merely attending as a spectator; and to show that my conduct was not very exceptionable whilst out there, I will say, not in vanity, but in exculpation, that I did not bet a cent, drink a drop of liquor, swear an oath, or get into any sort of dispute whatever, and, as far as my efforts could go, endeavored to prevent everything of the sort. The last charge then is the only one against which I have to vindicate myself—I mean that of loss of time: how much of this may be lawfully devoted to amusement with regard to myself, I claim to be a better judge than you.

My conscience acquits me of all blame in this last, as it does indeed in the whole matter, for I did not miss a lecture, and made up at night what I had lost in the day, to do which I had to decline an invitation to a party which I should have been gratified in attending. So that you see I have been able to restrain my pleasure in some degree at least.

I thought when I first opened your letter that you meant to accuse me of some penitentiary offense, but I was a little consoled even then by reflecting that the orthodox Miss Hannah More had proved that the best man in the world must necessarily violate the whole decalogue every day of his life, and was quite delighted to find the whole charge no worse than that of having walked a mile to see a horse run a mile. The only part of the whole matter that I regret is that Aunt Patsy was displeased at it, for it would have given me much more pleasure to gratify her than to have seen the race. With regard to yourself, it has only confirmed me in my determination to insist positively upon your renouncing "Coelebs" and "The Two Wealthy Farmers," for the immaculate Miss Hannah is the greatest foe to all sorts of pleasure, innocent as well as guilty, that I ever knew. Indeed, she is opposed on principle to pleasantness in style even, and yet that is the lady who could titter with Boswell behind the screen at Dr. Johnson's broad jokes.

But your address to me on another subject was deserving, I confess, of most serious consideration. It awakened feelings which I had long since endeavored to lull to repose. I acknowledge and feel the vanity of human pursuits, yet hug my delusion, and

can neither describe nor account for my feelings on the subject. It is enough to say that there is something too awful in the view of mortality to give me either pleasure or satisfaction in considering it. Although I sometimes feel as if I could face death with resignation and composure, I am still aware of the little preparation which I have made for such a change. The thoughts of leaving time and launching forth into eternity, of closing my eyes upon this world forever, of severing ties which can only be broken with the cord of existence itself, affect my mind with sensations which are anything but pleasing. There is a mystery about the subject baffling inquiry, and in this state of awful uncertainty we cannot but fear a change of whose nature we are unable to form any idea. Nay, we almost lose the notion of identity when we consider the separation to be effected between soul and body, and that while one exists through all eternity, the other is mouldering in silent dust.

When you write to William, do try to dissuade him from his mad project of entering college after Christmas; it is decidedly the wildest notion I ever knew.

We may mention here that this brother, William, the last child of James Hunter's first wife, who died at his birth, carried out his plan of entering college, and died there of typhoid fever on the sixth of February, 1829. His short life was rendered happy by a bright and genial nature, which won for him many friends. At the time of his mother's death he was taken

by his uncle's wife, Mrs. William Garnett of Rose Hill, and tenderly nurtured by her. He was regarded by his uncle and aunt as their own child, and they resented his being reclaimed by his father upon his second marriage. Little William, returning to the parental home when he was eight years old, became the spoiled pet of the family, endeared to all by his sweet and lovable nature, and in after years his friends told anecdotes and quoted sayings of the bright boy, whose life ended too early to have known any shadows. He did not have the grave and studious tastes of his brother Robert, and was more popular with his young companions.

CHAPTER IV.

POLITICS AND MARRIAGE.

On his return from college and law school, Mr. Hunter purchased a forest farm, by the advice of friends, for Hunter's Hill was considered unhealthy as a place of residence. The new house was built on an unimproved estate near the little village of Lloyds, about three miles higher up the country and further from the Rappahannock River than Hunter's Hill. Thither the family removed, and "Fonthill," under their management, planted and improved with best taste and care, was rapidly transformed from a barren waste to an attractive and inviting place of residence. There was at one time an idea prevailing among his friends that Mr. Hunter would do well to leave his native State and settle in New Orleans to practice law, but this was abandoned, and we find him in 1830 following his profession in his own county, but his mind and interests ever turned to politics. In 1835, when but twenty-six years of age, he was elected to the House of Delegates from Essex, and served during the sessions of 1835-36 and 1836-37.

When young Hunter entered the House of Delegates, Littleton Waller Tazewell was the Governor of the State, and the first state paper upon which he was called to act was the message of the Executive. Mr. Micou, in his biographical sketch of Mr. Hunter, written for the *Richmond Dispatch*, says: "Some of his contemporaries at that first session were Thomas W. Gilmer, Valentine Southall, Edmund P. Hunter, William R. Johnson (remembered as a famous turfman as well as a statesman), John M. Gregory, Fayette McMullin, John Minor Botts (who contested the seat of William B. Randolph, and was seated December 24, 1835), Hugh A. Garland, George W. Summers, Vincent Witcher, and O. M. Crutchfield, and in 1836-37 we find in the House some of the above, together with Thomas H. Bagley, Alexander Rives, Thomas Jefferson Randolph, A. H. H. Stuart, William L. Goggin, Robert W. Withers, John R. Edmunds, Robert McCandlish, Joseph Segar, and Samuel McDowell Moore. This period is made memorable by the discussion and adoption of the Virginia resolutions in regard to the anti-slavery associations formed in the Northern States, which denied the power of Congress to

legislate on the subject, and by the discussions on the 'Expounding Resolutions.'

"Upon the latter, Mr. Hunter made probably his first speech in the Virginia Legislature, February 26, 1836."

It was a very memorable period in his life, besides its political importance, for in that first session he met his future wife, Miss Dandridge, the niece of Judge Tucker's wife, whom he had first seen as a child at her uncle's house in Winchester.

She was now a lovely girl of eighteen, as he describes her in a letter to his sister Jane, written at the beginning of their acquaintance:

> She is young, handsome, intelligent, cheerful, agreeable and good. Do my adjectives startle you? They need not, for they are not extravagant, and yet what I have said is so little like what I want to say that I am tempted to throw my letter into the fire, as I have thrown several before. She is of good family, well connected, reared by a religious mother, and, I believe, high-souled. I find that I cannot safely be with her much more, unless I mean to proceed with the matter.
>
> I know that it seems ridiculous to be thus drawing the character of one of whom I have seen, comparatively speaking, so little, and yet these impressions have fastened themselves upon me. Something, coming from I know not where, is ever urging

me onward, and my friend Shirley Carter says "The Lord sends it to us." I have a capacity for feelings which have never yet been developed or expressed, and am capable of a devotion of which, perhaps, I am not suspected. I have never seen the day when I would barter them for mere wealth, or the more enlarged, but equally selfish, views of ambition. I only ask a return; but no more on this head, or I shall verge upon the sentimental.

Mary Evelina Dandridge, the youngest daughter of Adam Stephen (or Stevens) Dandridge, of the Bower, Jefferson County, then in Virginia, now in West Virginia, deserved all the adjectives applied by her young lover. She was destined to be the crown and blessing of his life, for no man was ever more happily married. She was descended from Alexander Spottswood, or Spottiswoode (Governor of Virginia in Queen Anne's time), whose daughter Dorothea married Nathaniel West Dandridge, and their son, Alexander Spottswood Dandridge, was the grandfather of Mrs. R. M. T. Hunter.

Mr. William Spottswood Fontaine, in a letter to Mr. Hunter of August 7, 1848, says that his (Mr. Fontaine's) mother was a niece of Captain A. S. Dandridge, and told him that her uncle was a native of Hanover County, Virginia, and a captain in the Revolutionary

War, in which he distinguished himself. In May, 1795, he had been a member of the first Kentucky Convention. He married a daughter of General Stevens, and must have made his home in the Valley of Virginia, as his family continued to hold property and reside there. His son, Adam Stephen Dandridge, married Miss Sarah Pendleton, and their home was "The Bower," in Jefferson County.

There is among Mr. Hunter's papers an order from a Colonel Alexander Spottswood, written in December, 1776, for regimental goods, to James Hunter, a merchant of Fredericksburg, Virginia, the great-uncle of Robert Hunter. The order follows, with spelling and capitals copied:

Dear Sir:

I have at last obtained an Order of Council for the Goods I laid by in your store, which is to be charged to the Continent. I cannot conveniently send for them before the first of January, when I shall send up an officer with the Order to Receive them. You'l please to mark the 2nd Regt. on them, and Lay them on one Side, with all the White Binding you have in your Store, and White Mettle Buttons.

I am yr. obt. st. (sic),

ALEXR. SPOTTSWOOD.

14th. Dec. 1776.

This order is labeled "1777. Col. Alexr. Spottswood," and was probably filled and dis-

patched in the new year. We thus find the relatives of Robert Hunter and Mary E. Dandridge in business communication with each other, unconscious of the future family connection which the new century would bring.

Mary Dandridge, or "Line,"[1] as she was generally called by her family, was a belle among her cousins and acquaintances, and some of her admirers playfully called her the "Queen of the Valley," for the bright graciousness of her manners won for her as many hearts as the attraction of her beauty.

Her first cousin, Philip Pendleton Cooke, wrote his best known and most musical verses, "Florence Vane," under the inspiration of her charms, and was an ardent suitor for her hand. She was also beloved by another cousin, exceptionally gifted in mind and person, who captivated her girlish fancy; but her family objected to the young man on the score of dissipation, and the mutual understanding was broken off.

Mary Dandridge was sent by her anxious mother to spend a winter in Richmond with the family of her uncle, Judge Tucker, and

[1]Pronounced Lene.

here at little more than eighteen she met her future husband, R. M. T. Hunter. As soon as the rumor of this affair reached Mr. Hunter's family in Essex, his sister Jane, after writing on other subjects, noticed it as follows:

And now I must tell you a piece of news that I heard an hour or two ago, one in which both you and ourselves are deeply interested. Can you guess it? If you can, it is true. Mr. P. came up from Tappahannock today, and tells us he hears you are going to be married; he seems prodigiously interested, and says if it is so, he thinks he must go over to Richmond to see the lady. Now if it is so, let me know in time to have a clean dress done up to meet her in when she comes, and again, if she is anybody, who is she? You know I have long wanted another sister, but do let her be a fine one.

We are, as you may guess, full of conjectures on the subject. Mr. P. has, I believe, no doubt of its truth, though I can hear no grounds, but that —— heard it.

I should have felt more excited, but that I am so anxious to hear you are well again that I have no other anxiety to spare. Why does not the legislature rise? I hope this first bright weather may make them long for a sight of their own fields again. I should think they would be weary of a dirty town by this time, and am sure I would not put myself under such confinement for all the honors to be won there. Tell them I make a motion to adjourn.

The writer of the above playful lines could not then foresee the infinite joy and comfort which this marriage was destined to afford, not only to her personally, but to the whole family and connection. The young bride-elect was to be in the early days of her married life the petted and beloved younger sister, and afterwards the valued mainstay of the family, to whom she brought the sunshine of her bright and loving nature.

The marriage took place on the 4th of October, 1836, two days after the bride's nineteenth birthday, at her home, 'The Bower," in Jefferson County. From this union nine children were born, but only four survived their parents, as will be seen in the progress of this sketch. To show the high estimation in which Mr. Hunter was held by his family and friends, we subjoin extracts from some letters written during his terms of service in the State Legislature. His sisters were all women of intelligence and culture, but Jane S. Hunter, the third of these sisters, was perhaps the most remarkable of the family for originality of mind and force of character.

She was almost entirely self-educated, but her thirst for knowledge led her to the attainment of a wider culture than many carefully

trained students can claim, and her masculine disregard of the usual pursuits of her sex left her free to follow her natural bent. Her strong, clear judgment and superior faculties were crowned by a rare unselfishness and benevolence, which, animated by a sincere Christian faith, inspired her untiring efforts for the good of others. Her ready sympathies were not only enlisted by any tale of sickness or sorrow, but her active energies never rested without at least an attempt to relieve them.

To her own family her aid and counsel were invaluable, and her devotion to the members of her home circle never induced her to lower for a moment the lofty standard which she held before them, as before herself. Her sisters, Martha and Sally, shared her high, unselfish views, and co-operated with her in all her schemes of philanthropy. The eldest daughter, Mrs. Garnett, had, as we have said, another home, but spent much time with her brother. During Mr. Hunter's first legislative term, Jane Hunter wrote to him as follows:

December 17th, 1835.

My Dear Robert:

It seems hardly worth writing, when we expect you so soon, but that you may not have it to say that you did not receive a line from me while you

were away, I have taken my pen. We concluded from the *Enquirer* that the Assembly adjourned last Saturday, and we were looking for you all day Monday, but as we have heard nothing more of it since I suppose it is next Saturday, instead of the last, that they will adjourn.

I felt more than ever anxious for you to get over after I heard of your having such a bad cold. I know change of air and a wood fire would cure it at once.

I put my blessing on Richmond when I heard how much indisposed you had been, and should be very glad for the Assembly to rise the first of February, even though our Benjamin should go unelected, and indeed I think the best thing that can be done is to come home. This present situation reminds me very much of the scene in the "Critic" where they all stand with drawn swords without knowing what to do next. They tell me you are all servants of the people, and, if so, I am sure I don't know how you are to act when your masters do not know their own minds.

My greatest anxiety in the matter is to see that you are in the House, as that shows me you are well enough to attend.

I saw L. B. the other day and she told me she always looked in the papers for your name; she said you had not written to Mr. Baylor, but she supposed from the different committees she saw your name on that you had not had time.

Your friend Mr. P. was here this morning, and says he knows you will be very popular in the House, but I should think that would take more than one

session, and I am sure at that price I would not wish you to be. There is nothing new amongst us of any kind, except about a dozen weddings that are to take place in the next week. I hope we shall hear from you tomorrow, and then we shall know certainly what day to look out, and not keep the tea-kettle boiling, as sister Martha has been doing for you for some nights past.

It is hardly worth saying that all send their love, as you know that is with you at home and abroad.

They have come for my letter, so farewell until next week. Yours,

J. S. HUNTER.

In a later letter of the same winter she says:

Yours is a spirit which can never be content in the fetters with which the God of this world loads his victims, even though it may wear them. Now there is a truth which can make us free from all spiritual bondage, and this truth God has promised to reveal to the hearts of all who ask it. If I should ever live to see that day, I should think all my wishes for you fulfilled in that one. I have been pleased to hear that you have been enjoying yourself more of late. I think the society you have moved in this winter will be an improvement as well as a pleasure.

You know even Aladdin's lamp grew rusty by long disuse and required a little rubbing to bring out the genius of bright things. I never had any objection to society, but to the "frolicking," as they call it, and for that I suppose I may trust you, after the compliment I heard paid you the other day by your old friend Mr. G.

Talking of the different parties, he said he put principle on party lines out of the way when he voted for you. He wanted a man without spot or blemish, for though he might frolic and do wrong himself, he did not want a member that would.

He could have paid you no compliment that would have pleased me so much, and I took as much pains to entertain him as if he had been Mr. Leigh. It happened that we had several of your constituents to see us during the last week, and they all inquired after "Robert" most affectionately, Achilles Noel among others. From what I hear on all sides, I think there will be but little doubt of your election, and I believe you have done right to offer again, as far as political honor is concerned. I think that quite a sufficient reason, if you do not find it a kind of life that militates against the good of your soul, that is with me the paramount question.

Your friend seems stepping into public life as gingerly as if he was learning to walk on the slack rope, but it will not do; promptitude and decision are everything in our collision with the world. Set them once to doubting our objects and wishes and they will never take the trouble to solve their doubts.

There seems to have been some talk of a judgeship for Mr. Hunter, and the same sister writes in one of her letters about this time:

And now with regard to what has of late interested us so much—the judgeship. I am content that it should have been settled as it is, and, although I saw advantages in it, I was not disappointed, for I always calculated on obstacles arising that would prevent your accepting it, and I need hardly say that I would

not have your honor compromised even in the smallest degree—no, not to see you emperor of the world; that is, not what the world calls honor, but what you and I consider as such, for the definition the world attaches to the word is so capricious, and depends so entirely on the party that uses it, that it is worse than vain to attempt to conform to such a standard. I am afraid you have had a disagreeable time in the House, although I know your moderation will make it less so to you than it would be to most others.

I think myself that the Jackson party are very provoking and insulting; but, on the other side, I think it is a wrong spirit that is urging the Whigs on every occasion to broach the deadly differences that are separating the Union, and the prosecution of which must end in separation or in a complete display of our own weakness. Yet I still think your party is waging a glorious warfare that will be rewarded in history, if it is trampled under foot now.

It is the old story of Might against Right, and my faith is that the latter must be ultimately victorious, but if the contest has the effect of wearying you of public life, I shall not quarrel so much with the cause. I believe a nobler ambition bounds your horizon than what belongs to the petty strife of political life, and you would be far happier to walk in freedom and independence of mind the path pointed out by your own conscience and intellectual tastes than in any reward that mere worldly ambition has to bestow. But I am content to trust your own judgment in these things, because I believe that God has implanted his good spirit in your heart that will continue its whispering until it wins you to yield

yourself to its guidance, and then, however dangerous and difficult your path may be, there will be an ever-brightening light within to illumine the way. I have, like yourself, been thinking much of the vanity of earthly things, and the return of this season always deepens these impressions.

In her brother's absence his sister Jane attended to farming matters at home, and some of her reports to him, first of difficulties represented to her by different agents, and then of her proposed solution of them, are models of clear, practical common-sense. After a long letter about cross-fences, crops, etc., she writes:

I don't know whether I have made myself plain, but Mr. —— was imperative in requiring me to make the attempt, so there was no alternative. As I can hear no talk of that blessed legislature rising, it will be necessary to have something done before you get back, so you must bring your mind to bear on the subject and let me hear from you, and then I can manage very smartly. Is anything to be done with that meadow, and what do you want about the ploughing up here?

Now I have finished my tiresome letter, that I fear you will hardly have patience to read.

We met —— the day we came down, but had only time for a few words. You will never have occasion to be your own trumpeter while he lives. Mr. P. says he sees his prophecies about your standing in the House are more than verified; that a friend says he was quite astonished at the progress you had

made, and what pleased me most was to hear it was with both parties. The *Whig* did not get to Lloyds on Monday, much to the disappointment of all your friends. For your speech, I must say I was satisfied with it, and you know I always value my own good opinion of my friends more than that of the world; but, seriously, I was more pleased to hear that you still want to come home. I trust that you will never value the applause of the world more than purer pleasures, and it is my daily prayer that you may not love the praise of men more than the praise of God. I have less fear for you, for I believe you have more pleasure in the consciousness of strength than in the honors it obtains.

In regard to the judgeship mentioned in one of the above letters, we will insert two other letters or extracts from them, the first from his Aunt Patsy, loved and honored by him as a mother, and the second from his sister, M. F. Hunter.

His aunt's letter is dated December 19, but no year is given. It evidently belongs to the close of 1835:

Your letter, which I may say I had longed to receive, came, and with it brought a blight to my fondest and most tenderly cherished hope, and I was weak enough to suffer a tear to rise, but I strove to conceal my disappointment, and, as is now my rule, made no exposé of my feelings.

As you were governed by the light of conscience and a sense of honor, I have nothing to be dissatisfied at, but should rather rejoice,—alas the flesh is weak. Now you must not think that pride or ambitious motives swayed or ruled my feelings in this my ardent desire, which I allowed myself to hope would be realized. No, I trust a motive entirely pure and free from everything selfish was predominant, for I thought the appointment here alluded to would suit your taste, allow you some repose, and, as the Irish woman says in the story, "allow you to make up your soul," and I felt no doubt of your filling this or any other station honorably.

So I will not intrude my feelings on you any longer, but end by saying that while I am sorry, deeply sorry, to find I can hope no longer, I am proud in believing that you were actuated by the purest motives, and may God ever guide you in the path of virtue and truth. My heart is bound to your honor. I do not know why you complain of receiving no letters; both Martha and Jane have written, and the measles have left without further notice. Ere this, I expect Maria has written, but in case she has not I will tell you that the Elmwood family are all well, and we have reason to hope that Muscoe's teacher will turn out to be well fitted to instruct his pupils.

Our neighborhood news is so poor and meagre that I will not attempt to tell it to you, save that your cousin, E. R., on the morning of Tuesday will be a bride, and will bid farewell to her home immediately after the ceremony, arrayed in cloak and bonnet of royal purple, but as you are no lady, I

cannot give you more of these details, so much the subject of small talk with us. You men cannot appreciate them.

Your old friend is, I believe, as attentive to your concerns as if almost they were his own, and Jane is very busy planning, and executing, too, her gardening preparations.

Martha wishes to speak for herself, so I will bid you farewell, hoping we shall meet another Xmas.

Fifty-eight have I numbered, and my old associates and friends, with whom I commenced life, and who at this season were wont to meet each other with kind and cheerful greetings, have nearly all departed.

The season brings to me most painful reminiscences, but I promised to conclude, and so I will.

Affect'ly yrs.,

M. T. H.

From his sister Martha:

My Dear Robert:

I was surprised and sorry to find you had not received any letters from home since you left it, as I should always wish, as far as any effort of mine was concerned, to ward off every care or consciousness that could possibly arise to disturb your mind.

I have thought so much of the judgeship that I have not liked to say anything about it to you, as I know by experience there are doubtful conjunctures in life when suggestions, advice, and even expressions of feeling are tormenting from our friends, and the more so, even from our confidence in their affection, as we feel that any step we take which concerns us materially must affect them also.

But, as I suppose the matter is by this time decided, I must say, what I hope you were before assured of, that I would not for the world have had you to balance between any motives of personal interest and considerations of honor; indeed, I was so certain that nothing would induce you to do so, that I felt almost what the result would be.

Not that on the face of things I perceive any contradiction between honor and interest in the affair, but I know only those who are spectators and parties in these matters are proper judges. Honor at the best is of a very vague, delicate and undefined nature, as Falstaff has long ago proved, and political honor is the most undefined species of it; but unsubstantial as it is, much more to be prized than anything else.

The Whigs may be a falling party now, but I cannot help thinking the time will come, and that perhaps not very distant, when our country will look back with pride and admiration on their gallant, disinterested efforts.

Should that time never come, there are walks of life happier far, I believe, than anything which political life can offer, so that there are advantages as well as disadvantages in looking on both sides of a question. I am very glad to hear that you keep well.

Yours most truly,

M. T. HUNTER.

The same sister in writing an anxious epistle to her brother about a long, cold ride to Richmond, not long after his marriage, says:

It made me sorry that you had ever come over at all, as I would greatly rather have suffered pecuniary loss and inconvenience than for you to have taken such a trip on our account, as things have turned out, and I regret the more because I know how willing you are, and always have been, to do anything for us you could, without regarding any personal consideration.

The ink is so frozen I fear you can scarcely decipher this. Tell Line [her sister-in-law] she must write as soon as you receive this, if only two or three lines, to let us hear from you. Jane says I must tell you she is in a thousand fidgets about you, and Aunt P. says she has felt as if she had a millstone about her neck ever since you went away.

Our best love to Line. I trust you are by this time safely by her side. May God bless you.

Yours ever,

M. T. HUNTER.

These letters and extracts serve to show the pride and affection with which the young politician was regarded in his own family, and with one or two written to the young wife, by a member of her new home circle, we will close the chapter and his term of service in the Virginia Legislature.

The young nephew of R. M. T. Hunter, whose after career so fully realized his early promise, was at this time a youth in his sixteenth year, and writes to his new sister, as

he called his uncle's wife, who was only a few years older than himself, from his home at Elmwood:

January 13th, 1837.

I am sorry that it has not been in my power to write before. I have been so busy lately that I have had but little time.

Indeed, my hands are still full, so full that I should defer my letter still longer did I not know that if possible I will be still more occupied for the next few weeks than before. Accordingly, I seize the present time, fearing that a delay might prevent my writing at all.

I speak quite as a man of business, don't I? I talk of my business as much as any public character could do of his, yet I do not exaggerate, for I have to study very hard.

Whenever I go to Fonthill now I miss you sadly; indeed, now you have once been there, I don't know how we ever did without you. I missed your singing greatly, but yourself more.

I was disappointed at not seeing you at Xmas, though I can't say that I expected you. You sent me word by Uncle Robert that your next letter should be to me, and I hold you bound to keep your promise. I am anxious to receive a letter from you, and have carefully perused all your Essex letters.

I hardly think that mother and I will see you in Richmond this winter. Grandma is so unwell that we would not like to leave her, but if she gets much better I entertain a faint hope of seeing you towards the end of February.

All the Fonthill family came up yesterday evening on a visit of two or three weeks, and I was delighted to see them. I must leave room for the song. You remember you promised to introduce it this winter, if you have to go to a party solely for that purpose, yet you must do it. I am quite anxious to hear of "the new song introduced by Mrs. Hunter of Essex, at Mr. ——'s party."

When did you last hear from Mrs. Dandridge? I shall like to hear how she and all your other friends and relatives are. I was glad to hear that your brother Philip had determined to join Uncle Charles. I hope they will find mutual pleasure and advantage in their acquaintance. Now for the song. It is by Dietmar von Aste, a Minnesinger:

"There sate upon the linden tree
A bird, and sang its strain;
So sweet it sang, that as I heard
My heart went back again.
It went to one remembered spot,
It saw the rose-trees grow,
And thought again the thoughts of love
There cherished long ago.

"A thousand years to me it seems
Since by my fair I sate;
Yet thus to be a stranger long
Is not my choice, but fate:
Since then I have not seen the flowers
Nor heard the bird's sweet song;
My joys have all too briefly passed,
My griefs been all too long."

It would take me a week and a day to tell all the messages about your headaches, and to give all the

love sent you by me, and all the Fonthill and Elmwood families. My best love to Uncle Robert.

Yours very sincerely,

MUSCOE R. H. GARNETT.

We anticipate a little in here inserting a letter from the same young scribe, written while at the University of Virginia, to Mrs. Hunter, after her husband's election to the House of Representatives:

December 7th, 1838.

My Dear Sister:

Happy as I know you are in being at your old home, I am still selfish enough to feel a sort of regret every time I think of it. I am not bad enough absolutely to wish you back in Essex, but then I cannot tell you how much I shall miss you at Xmas. I had promised myself so much pleasure in meeting you, and I had looked forward to such a happy reunion of all that it is a great disappointment to find that one seat in our circle will be vacant. And then I shall hear none of your songs; you had promised to sing all my favorites. The idea of not seeing you until July is bad, indeed; only three months have passed, and yet it seems as many years since I was at Fonthill, and I suppose at that rate the next seven months will be an awfully long period. However, every time I wish you at home I feel my conscience condemn me.

I know how much you are enjoying yourself at "The Bower," and how wrong it is to wish you back, merely on personal motives.

Mother wrote me she saw you and Uncle Robert at Elmwood the evening of her return. You may imagine how much pleasure her visit gave me. I don't think words ever sounded half so sweet to me as when some one told me that my "Ma wanted me."

The only drawback to my pleasure was the shortness of her time. She stayed only two days—very happy, but very short, days. I suppose she gave you an account of ——'s courtship. He was very open, and talked over the whole affair with me, and told me all the particulars, some of which were very laughable, but hardly more so than his manner in telling them. I received letters from home yesterday, dated last Monday.

I hear that the President's message again recommends the sub-Treasury, so I suppose there will be another warm debate on it in Congress, and that Uncle Robert will join in it again.

How I should like to be there to hear him! You remember the evening he expected to speak, and we were to have gone up together, and you wished to get behind a pillar so that he might not discover you listening? I look back very often with the greatest pleasure to the short time I spent in Washington last spring.

I had not seen Uncle Robert and yourself for so long a time, and everything seemed so new to me, that I enjoyed myself highly.

CHAPTER V.

PUBLIC LIFE.

Mr. Hunter was elected to the House of Representatives in 1837, where he served continuously until 1847, with the exception of one term, when he was defeated by a small majority by the Hon. Willoughby Newton of Westmoreland County.

"During the sessions of 1839, 1840 and 1841 he was Speaker of the House, and his rulings made during that period are still regarded as of high authority on questions of parliamentary law. In that body he advocated the annexation of Texas, the compromise of the Oregon question, the retrocession of Alexandria to Virginia, and supported the Walker tariff of 1846. In December, 1847, he was elected by the General Assembly to the United States Senate, and soon took a leading position in that body among such distinguished statesmen as Calhoun, Clay, Webster, Cass, Benton, and others of less note, and at a later period he, with Davis of Mississippi, and Toombs of Georgia, constituted what was known as the Southern Triumvirate.

"Early in his Congressional career he adopted in the main the States' Rights and low tariff views of Mr. Calhoun, and was among the ablest disciples and supporters of that eminent statesman.

"He voted for the Clayton compromise, and the extension of the line 36 degrees 30 minutes, established by the Missouri Compromise of 1820, to the Pacific.

"As chairman of the Committee on Finance in the Senate, he made an able and exhaustive report on the coinage of the country, and recommended and secured a reduction of the quantity of silver in the smaller coins, which checked their exportation to foreign countries. He was the author of the tariff of 1857, which effected a considerable reduction in duties and enlarged the free list. He originated the bonded-warehouse system, under which imported goods were allowed to remain in Government warehouses until the owners desired to put them upon the market, the duty being paid at the time of withdrawal, a system which was a great convenience to merchants, and entailed no loss on the Government, and which is still continued.

"He advocated the admission of Kansas under the LeCompton Constitution, and in 1860

made an elaborate speech in the Senate in defense of slavery and the right of a slaveholder to carry his property into the Territories. He was a prominent candidate for the Presidency in that year, having secured the Virginia delegation over ex-Governor Henry A. Wise, which fact attests his great popularity in the State, as the delegates were elected by conventions held in each Congressional district.

"He was the orator of the day on the 22d of February, 1858, when Crawford's equestrian statue of Washington, which stands on the Capitol Square, was unveiled. His address, delivered in the City of Richmond, Virginia, in the campaign of 1852, in which he traced the growth and history of parties, and demonstrated the soundness of the States' Rights view of the nature of the Federal compact, is one of the ablest popular disquisitions on that subject, and the address in the African Church in the memorable Know-Nothing campaign of 1855, on the dangers to be apprehended from secret political parties, is still referred to by those who heard it as a masterpiece of eloquence, oratory, and overwhelming logic."[1]

[1] *Vide* sketch of R. M. T. Hunter written for the *Richmond Dispatch*, December 13, 1891, by A. R. Micou.

In December, 1839, Mr. Crallé wrote from Lynchburg, Virginia, to Mr. Calhoun, apropos of Mr. Hunter's election as Speaker:

I do not know exactly the state of parties in the House. The election of Hunter adds to the mystery, when I look at the votes for Lewis. But this is a mere episode in the play.

I trust that Hunter will fulfil the expectations of his true friends; will vindicate his character for uprightness and independence; and look steadily to the advancement of those principles with which the names of his ancestors, the character of his State, and his own are so fully identified.

He has but to adhere to the strict parliamentary rule in the appointment of committees, etc., to place his reputation on a firm basis. I much esteem him, and sincerely hope he will do this. If he sides with the Federalists, he is lost beyond redemption. I was never more confident of any result than that of the election in Virginia. The Whigs will be routed, "horse, foot and dragoons."

There is no possible chance for their success. Harrison will fall far below the standard of Clay in the State.

Upon this you may rely with the utmost confidence.

A letter from Mr. Calhoun, written in the same year, but a few months previous to the above, says:

FONTHILL, June, 1839.

My Dear Sir:

I write to say to you how much I am gratified with the success of your election. The struggle in Virginia seemed to be to destroy all who would not range themselves under the flag of the Administration or opposition, as mere partisans, and that you should have sufficient strength of yourself to maintain your position between the contending parties is a source of joy to your friends in this State, and to none more than myself.

What is the true result of your election, and what is the future prospect of Virginia? Is she destined to be bound by the mere trammels of party, or is there a prospect that she will ever assume independent ground on her former principles?

What course did the two parties take in reference to yourself? Who brought out your old opponent, and on what ground did he place his election? Our State is profoundly quiet.

Public sentiment approaches to something like unanimity on all the great questions of the day, and our people seem determined to hold the presidential election strictly subordinate to their principles. We begin to turn our attention to the readjustment of the tariff under the compromise act.

My mind is made up that it ought not to be delayed beyond the next session, and that we ought to go for a uniform *ad val.* duty on all articles, without any discrimination, and such, I think, will be the unanimous voice of the State.

It is our only safe position, and if we can get the South to unite on it, its success is certain.

It would give us a security that we have never heretofore had under the government. I intend to direct a good deal of my attention to the subject before the meeting of Congress, and will probably make an early move on it. This, however, I write to you as a friend, and for your private ear, as it perhaps would not be advisable that what I contemplate should be known, but I hope, if you concur with me, that you will take such steps by correspondence and otherwise, as may prepare our friends for the movement in your State.

Do let me hear from you at your early convenience, and favor me with your views on that and all other points that you may deem worthy of attention.

What would be the effect in Virginia if Clay should not be nominated by the Whig Convention?

With my kind respects to Mrs. H., I am with great respect,

Yours truly,

J. C. CALHOUN.

Hon. R. M. T. Hunter.

Among the notable speeches of Mr. Hunter's long ante-bellum political career were the following:

On the bill to establish an independent treasury, delivered in the House of Representatives, June 22, 1838; a previous one in the House, on the bill imposing additional duties as depositories, in certain cases, on public officers. This was delivered in October, 1837. Speech on the Oregon Territory bill, delivered

in the Senate of the United States, July 11, 1848. Speech in the United States Senate, July 18, 1850, on the admission of California into the Union, the establishment of Territorial Governments for Utah and New Mexico, and making proposals to Texas for the settlement of her northern and western boundaries. Speech on the French Spoliation Bill, delivered in the United States Senate, January 20, 1851. Speech in the Senate of the United States, February 17, 1852, on the bill granting land to the State of Iowa in aid of constructing certain railroads. Speech in the Senate, May 5, 1852, against increasing the appropriation for the Collins Line of steamers. Speech on governmental expenditures, in reply to Hon. James A. Pearce, of Maryland, delivered in the United States Senate, May 31, 1852. Speech on bill to amend the acts to regulate the appraisement of imported merchandise in the United States Senate, February 4, 1851. Address before the Democratic Association of Richmond, October 1, 1852. Speech on a railroad to the Pacific, delivered in the Senate, February 19, 1853. Speech in the United States Senate, February 24, 1854, on Nebraska and Kansas, and a discourse before the Virginia Historical Society,

December 14, 1854. Address before a Democratic mass-meeting at Poughkeepsie, October 1, 1856, on the occasion of a Democratic demonstration, which he was invited to attend. His oration of February 22, 1858, delivered at Richmond, Virginia, when the equestrian statue of Washington was inaugurated, has been already mentioned in quoting from Mr. Micou's sketch, and the compliments to this and many other speeches and addresses delivered at various times by Mr. Hunter are too numerous to give in a brief memorial like this.

The future writer of a more extended biography may hereafter collect and publish these notices, printed and private.

Among them is a complimentary letter from Hon. Chas. J. Faulkner, written at the time of Mr. Hunter's Poughkeepsie speech:

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE ROOMS,

WASHINGTON, October 6, 1856.

Hon. R. M. T. Hunter:

Dear Sir—I should do injustice to my own feelings if I did not avail myself of the earliest moment to express to you the very high gratification which I have just derived from the perusal of your able, eloquent and statesmanlike speech at the Poughkeepsie meeting.

It is the source to me of no little pride that to the National Democratic Committee, over which I have the honor to preside, is the country indebted for the preliminary movement, at least, which led to the appeal to you, and which has resulted in this noble vindication of the endangered interests of the Union. I am free to confess that for some years past there has not existed upon my part in reference to yourself any very warm and cordial sentiment of political friendship.

I need not go into any explanation of the cause. It is true there is no moment in which I would have done you injustice, or by any act of mine have sought to impair your just hold upon the confidence of your State and country.

But the closing months of the last session of Congress have produced in me feelings of a very different character, which I have freely from time to time communicated to our mutual friend, Mr. Bocock. And I avail myself therefore of this occasion to say that your eminent qualities as a statesman ever faithful to your trust and devoted to the best interests of your country will cause me to look with unmingled satisfaction upon your future advancement to any position of honor or public service to which the admiration and gratitude of your fellow citizens may elevate you.

I am truly yours,

CHARLES JAMES FAULKNER.

It would not be too much to say that Mr. Hunter possessed the esteem and confidence of all who knew him, even when, as in Mr.

Faulkner's case, they were not in full political accord with him. He was always considered safe and trustworthy, and his counsel was sought and valued. In proof of this assertion we will give later on some of his letters from public men.

CHAPTER VI.

PRIVATE LIFE AND LETTERS.

While actively engaged in politics, Mr. Hunter's large and growing family involved him in many expenses besides those incidental to public life, and even at the beginning of the Civil War his financial difficulties were very serious.

His letters, written and received, show rapidly increasing pecuniary embarrassment, and his friends would often jestingly tell him that the financial abilities so successfully exerted in public interests were sadly needed at home.

Naturally sanguine, and by temperament opposed to economic details, Mr. Hunter was too prone to engage in speculative enterprises, and would lavish any funds at his disposal on his mill, a favorite hobby with him.

Hospitable almost to excess, and encouraged in this by his genial and generous-hearted wife, they kept open house as long as circumstances rendered it possible, and so paramount was the duty of hospitality considered in the Fonthill household, that no member of the family expressed open dissent or opposition to its freest exercise. It would be

a mistake to suppose that Mr. Hunter was solely devoted to political pursuits and interests to the exclusion of domestic affections.

Grave and reserved in temperament, with a soul attuned to high thoughts and aspirations, he was neither addicted nor adapted to "light chat" or gossiping intercourse, but his affections were strong and tenacious. Several family and friendly letters are given in these pages with a view to showing the deep affection, apart from admiration, which many of his friends and kindred felt for the Virginia statesman throughout his career.

His nature was single and truthful, not inclined to doubt or suspicion, and his regard and friendship, once given, were not easily or lightly withdrawn.

His disposition was gentle, his judgment cool and reliable, and his power of self-control remarkable until late in life, when trouble and disease affected a temper naturally calm and equable, and rendered him more irritable.

His usual manner was quietly courteous and rarely excited, but a political friend told the writer that when speaking, after the first introductory remarks, his eyes sparkled and his voice deepened in violence and compass, while the animation produced by his interest

in his subject imparted a charm to his whole manner and bearing. He was considered an exceptionally good electioneerer in earlier life, and always took a marked interest in young men, evincing an unfailing anxiety to assist them in their chosen career. This feeling of interest and sympathy with the young and ambitious was deepened and intensified in the case of his nephew, Muscoe R. H. Garnett, to whom his attachment was constant, and proved by every means in his power.

The two letters subjoined speak for themselves:

[UNDATED.]

My Dear Sister:

I have just read your letter to Line, and hot as it is, I will write tonight, whilst things are fresh in my mind. I am very much concerned to find you writing in so gloomy a strain. Rely upon it, and I am speaking from much experience, that the human mind soon borrows its complexion from what it feeds upon. These gloomy reflections are good neither for the soul nor body. It is the fault of us both that we are too apt to take up disgusts at the necessary incidents and occurrences of human life and try to persuade ourselves that there is nothing worth striving for in order to excuse our listlessness and apathy. This very disposition has spoiled me, and I am ashamed of it now that some of my best years have been wasted in the indulgence of my

morbid appetite for sad thoughts and in the cultivation of a thousand fastidious scruples that almost unfit us for any useful purpose in life.

Listen to me, for I am speaking as truly on this subject as if I were inspired. Why should you be looking out for green spots as a resting place when the body can no longer be useful to the soul, and when there are so many barren spots that might be made green? This disposition reacts upon your son and will destroy that elasticity of spirit so necessary to give vigor and energy to youth.

The world—the teeming world—is before him, and you too, old as you may think yourself. A thousand useful pursuits are open to you both, and whatever employment is useful will turn out to be agreeable. You ought to give him the spur of hope and encourage cheerfulness of spirits.

How can he have these if, in his constant association with you, he sees you gloomy and depressed?

The solitary life which he leads and the scenes through which he has lately passed have been unfavorable to his spirits, and in that respect they are likely to impair his energy of character. It was partly for this reason that I wished him to stay longer at this place. I wanted him to see the bustle and stir of life, to catch the spirit of enterprise and of youthful hope, which will be necessary to bear him successfully through life.

Colonel Pickens wished me to carry him down to see Mr. Calhoun, and I regret that he did not remain longer so that I might have done it. I was glad, however, that he went down so soon when I found out how much you were disturbed at his

absence, but this is a womanly weakness, and you must get over it.

Not upon the idea of doing penance and of weaning yourself from an idol. This mode of viewing our duties as sacrifices will never do. It is incompatible with the love and reverence which we should feel to Him who prescribed these duties.

Neither do I object to a little wholesome meditation now and then upon "the shadows we are and the shadows we pursue." I have much sympathy, too, for the Jacques view of moralizing occasionally. But Mirza, I think, reserved only one day in the year for the first occupation, and I cannot consent that you should bury yourself in the stable woods, in imitation of the latter (Jacques).

I am content that once even in a month you should perform your ablutions earlier in the morning, and see during that day all the visions of Mirza, if you will; but when that day is over return to some useful and refreshing employment.

The garden and yard will give you exercise, and how many delightful pursuits invite you to mental occupation. Drink little tea, read no more novels, and betake yourself to some course of study which will give you regular and serious occupation for a portion of your leisure hours.

Do not laugh at this. You will find pleasure and health both to soul and body in some course of study (provided it be not a course of Calvinistic divinity, but one which will task your mental energies and employ your reason more and your imagination less). Above all things, do not torment

yourself by imagining future ills and by expecting all the possible mishaps which may befall Muscoe and yourself.

"Take no thought for the morrow" is a maxim which the Christian ought to understand. Discharge your duties today and put your faith in God to rule your future destiny and the events of tomorrow more wisely and happily than you could yourself if they were under your own control.

When you send your son into the world you must expect that he will meet with his share of mishaps—nay, it is best that he should have his trials, and you must suppose that he will have his portion. There is also another matter which I wish you could comprehend, but few women can.

It is this: He will undoubtedly err sometimes, and while at all times you ought to inculcate the right, yet there are occasions when it is wise to seem blind, because in some matters interposition from another wounds more than it corrects.

There are some minds to which it is enough to expose the fault—the more gently the better—and trust to their natural good sense and sound principles to correct it.

Muscoe's is one of these. Of course, I cannot specify all the errors to which I would have you seem blind, but I will illustrate my meaning a little. Muscoe did right to stay a day longer. I gave the advice and took the responsibility.

But suppose that he had been here alone and had thought it best to stay a single day beyond his time upon his own responsibility. You ought then to have considered first whether the inducement was

such as to have warranted him in disappointing you; and, if so, you should have been entirely silent. If, on the other hand, you thought it not enough, it would have been quite sufficient to have expressed to him your disappointment at not seeing him by the appointed time.

He will naturally strive to take the man more upon himself as he advances in years, and my fear is that you will check this disposition too much.

You must now rule him by love and be reasonable in your requirements of him if you wish to give a manly tone to his character. You have instilled good principles into him; continue to inculcate them with a mother's gentleness and love, and trust the rest to God, not with a faint and doubtful heart, but with your whole soul.

Do this, my dear sister, and God will regard your prayers and your pains. He is a noble boy; let him go to college alone and take his chances like other boys.

He will meet with no trials beyond his strength.

Impress upon him the fixed belief that your first wish is to see him return with the virtues, the manly qualities and the gentlemanly accomplishments which are man's best endowments. When he leaves you make him promise two things: First, to read a chapter in the Bible every day, either in the morning or at night; and, secondly, whenever he finds himself about to act, out of mere regard for public opinion (which sometimes it is right to do), to ask himself before he acts what you would think of the matter if you knew it.

These rules may seem to him to be small matters, but he will find both practices useful when he goes to college.

If you take my advice in this, I think you will never regret it. When the human mind reaches a certain stage it must be left free to act for the most part upon its own principles and not upon those of others, or else it will take a retrograde movement. I know of no situation in which the experiment of free agency can be so safely made as in the employments and under the restraints of college life.

If you could control him entirely for the three years which he may spend at college, he would enter the world as raw and inexperienced, to all practical purposes, as he is now. And he would then encounter ten times as many difficulties and temptations as he could be exposed to at college.

I fear that this will be unpalatable to you, but I ought to speak candidly to you.

Muscoe is almost as much to me as he is to you, and I wish him to make his first essay in life under what I believe to be the best circumstances. I regret to hear that you have been indisposed, but I have no doubt that an ounce or two of cheerfulness would do you more good than all the physic in the apothecary's shop. And why should you not administer this to yourself? Think of your son and the bright prospects which are before him. Imagine yourself in the Senate gallery whilst he stands forth the proudest and the strongest champion upon some great question which divides the public of his day; or follow him, if you prefer it, to the bar of the

Supreme Court, and watch the approving countenances of the judges as they mark his skill in threading the mazy labyrinths of the law.

I do not know when I shall see old Essex again. My heart, however, is with you, and I am anxious to get away.

Give my love to all, and may God bless you.

Yrs. affect'ly,

R. M. T. HUNTER.

Line does not know that I am writing. She is quite well and will advise you herself when she will return.

I am not sure that I shall not write you a quire tomorrow. This is by far the wisest letter I ever wrote in my life.

The next letter was written to his nephew, M. R. H. Garnett, while at college, and shows the affectionate and paternal interest felt by Mr. Hunter for this favorite relative.

It is undated, but was probably written in 1840 or 1841 :

Dear Muscoe:

I was selfish enough to have been a great deal concerned at missing you upon my return; but it was doubtless better that you should have gone when you did, as your class was in advance of you. I hope you are pleasantly situated and that your studies are agreeable to you.

There is nothing like entering into a profession *"con amore."* A mere sense of duty may make us labor enough to do pretty well, but there must be a certain degree of real interest in every pursuit to lead to eminence.

The law, I think, is generally undervalued by students at the commencement—I mean by those of liberal attainments and enlarged views, who, like Blackstone, are loath to bid farewell to their muse. Not that this parting is absolutely necessary, for, although the law is reputed to be "a jealous mistress," yet I think that a lawyer in this country is by no means required, or even justified, in giving up general literature. Like the Roman Advocate, he may have leisure for other things. For we have disused so much of the technicality of the English pleadings and have pruned away so many of their refinements that the science in this country may be said to rest (as I think) more upon general principles than it did or now does in England. It will, I think, be one of your pleasures, as you progress in the study, to find these principles of natural justice and law of more general application than perhaps you now suppose them.

By the way, I was glad to hear that you designed to commence, or continue (which is it?), the study of Anglo-Saxon.

I very much regret that I did not study both that and the German when I had leisure for such things. The first I believe to be very essential to an accurate English style.

Your style may be beautiful and polished without it—for such instances we have—and a knowledge of the true force of words, so essential to accuracy, may be acquired perhaps by other means, but certainly this study must conduce to that knowledge in a very great degree. I suppose, of course, you will combine historical reading as far as practicable

with your legal studies. I do not know the book, but from what I have heard of it I should think that Henry's History of England, particularly the reigns of the Edwards, indeed as far down as Henry the Eighth, would be useful and perhaps agreeable.

But you will be better able to judge of it when you turn over some of the chapters. If you have leisure, you ought to read "Thierry's History of the Norman Conquest," and you must make leisure to read "Vertot's Roman Revolutions."

This last I have not read; but lately, although not a new book, I hear it much and well spoken of. I mean to read it myself if I have leisure, but domestic pursuits and public disquietudes divert my attention much from matters which are more agreeable. My political enemies are, I believe, exceedingly bitter and will annoy me as much as they can. It is a poor life, after all, which renders us dependent upon others for positions and respectability in society, especially when the tests by which you are to be tried are constantly changing, but "*Revenons.*"

We are all quite well here, and the sick are recovering at Elmwood. These included Theodore and his wife.

I was concerned to hear that Gallatin's pamphlet had shaken your faith. You could not have read it attentively. I think the reasoning of both his pamphlets tends to the conclusion that specie currency is the best. He acknowledges changes in this which are great indeed in a bank man. He gives up the idea of a national bank as a regulator of currency and exchanges and goes for it only as a "fiscal agent." And although he is for State banks,

yet he reasons very like one who thought that they should be restricted to discount and deposit. But, after all, it is a great and perplexing subject—one upon which it is time enough for you to form your opinions, and one which you ought to study attentively at your leisure. God bless you, my dear nephew, and believe me, Yours affectionately,

R. M. T. HUNTER.

All here send their love, and Bob has written you several letters in a character which Champollion himself could not decipher. He says it means that "dear uncle must come home to see little Bob."

The subject of this postscript was Mr. Hunter's first-born child and namesake, a boy of many hopes and much early promise. He developed into a youth who combined much of his father's ability, with the aesthetic tastes and bright graciousness of his mother, but the brilliant promise of his career was cut short by rapid consumption, which carried him off at the early age of twenty-two years.

The fondest hopes and ambition of his father and whole family were centered in him, and his premature death not only clouded the brightness of a singularly happy home circle, but seemed to foreshadow the decline of the family fortunes. Mr. Hunter never completely rallied from the blow, and said that his ambition perished with his son. In a nature like

his, this could not be literally true while he retained his own faculties, but it showed the depth of his grief and the bitterness of disappointed hope.

The University friends of young R. M. T. Hunter were among the most promising of Virginia youth, and the bereaved mother treasured for the rest of her life the touching tributes to the early dead written by friends and classmates, some of whom are now prominent men, among them Colonel Archer Anderson of Richmond, Virginia; Professor James M. Garnett, late of the University of Virginia, now living in Baltimore, Md.; Professor Thomas R. Price of Columbia College, New York, and others. Young A. S. Pendleton, the gifted son of General W. N. Pendleton, and who afterwards fell in 1864 in the Valley of Virginia, wrote, as he said, "from a community of grief," and his beautiful letter seemed dictated by almost fraternal pride and affection.

But we anticipate in here recording this sad event, for before his life was thus overshadowed, Mr. Hunter enjoyed a long period of prosperity and success in public life and private.

Before giving a number of letters written to his wife, while his hopes and ambition were comparatively unchecked, we will here insert one from his devoted aunt, of whose wise counsels he was soon afterwards deprived, for she did not live to rejoice in his later successes.

This letter was written in January, 1838:

I thank you sincerely for your kind letter. Its welcome was greatly enhanced, as it was unexpected, because Mr. Garnett had just received one of four pages, and Line another by the same mail, so that I ought not to have calculated on hearing. I should have written before to you, but knowing that Line was regular in her communications and loves so well to break your seal I determined to forego the pleasure of writing to you, knowing that your numerous correspondents must of necessity draw much upon your time, and I would rather hear through another, if by so doing you might gain a little leisure, a brief space to think your own thoughts.

I know you will always keep a place in your heart for me and will never think of me but with kindest affection, so do not mistake me and think that I require any common assurances, such as usually seem necessary to keep friendship alive.

No, Bob, I have that faith, that confidence in you, that neither time nor circumstances can shake. Your letter gave me much pleasure, as you may know, for I put it in my bag and have read it more than twice or thrice.

It found me at Elmwood, where I came to stay a few days with Fenton, who was quite sick and had a considerable bleeding from the lungs. On the same lovely Sabbath morning you mention having spent in walking and thinking of home and friends at home, I was wandering about these lovely paths, thinking of the past and also the future. I assure you my thoughts spoke awfully to me and seemed to admonish me of the frailty and shortness of my tenure. My prayer has been fully granted, for when you were all young I earnestly implored of God that He would spare me to watch over and supply a mother's place to her children; and now I have seen you all attain, I may almost say, everything I could have expected. In this my measure has been full, and now for all this ought I not to be thankful, to be cheerfully resigned to whatever my lot may be? I feel that I am generally so, but at times the spirit is willing, but the flesh weak.

I will say nothing of churchgoing, for I feel that the time will come when you will say it is good that we should not forsake the assembling ourselves together. I expect you have had all the news from home and know more perhaps of them than I do. I have been here a week, and if they do not come up tomorrow I shall return to them. I have regretted very much being absent these few days from Mrs. Dandridge, for, on a close acquaintance, I perceive she is one whom we should all like to know more of, and I think I may say without reserve to you, she is equally pleased. No doubt Line has written to inform you that Charles has written to her brother Phil to come on immediately,

as there is now a vacancy for him. Maria sends you a great deal of love and says I must remind you to send the Nuga for Fenton, if you see an opportunity, to Fredericksburg. It is a French candy, and I mention this, as it may instruct you how to come at it. I have just concluded "Snarleyow," with a feeling of disgust for the writer and the revolting scenes he has had the impertinence to force on his readers. I have nothing new to relate from your neighborhood. There seems very little of interest afloat above common gossip, which is very seldom on the side of "charity that thinketh no evil."

I shall write to my old friend Archie Hunter and assure him of my existence. I ought long since to have done so, for he has been a good friend through a long life, and I am ashamed of my neglect. Of —— I can say nothing but that his downward course has surprised, vexed and mortified me. I think with you that his gifts are rare, but he wants that feeling which can alone give us high and elevated desires; he is satisfied to be on an equality with associates that he must know are not by the world considered as anything better than the beast that perishes. I wish he would return and marry, take to the law, and be the man he might. I am commissioned to give you a great deal of love, and particularly from poor Fenton. They have just taken her out to ride, and she charged me to mention her name particularly and specially.

Your ever fondly devoted M. T. H.

The following letter from Mrs. Hunter was written in the early years of her married life,

when she had only two children, and before the cares of life had settled down as heavily as they afterwards did. No year is given, but it was probably written in January, 1842 or 1843.

My Beloved Husband:

I have been feeling so badly for the last week that I had intended not to inflict a letter upon you. This morning we are but a small band. Sally, Sister Martha, Sister, and Muscoe are at Elmwood, and Sister Jane is on the bed, not feeling very well. Ma is watching by her, and Bob, Pink and I are keeping house below stairs—so now you have an exact picture of us all. I fancy you comfortably seated in the House, enjoying the society of some pleasant companion, or reading in the library, ensconced in a quiet alcove.

Ma was very glad to hear from home through your last letter. She says I must ask you what the boys are doing in Washington in these hard times, and she seems to think they are getting on badly without her.

It seems to me that Jefferson is certainly the most desirable place in the world as a residence, much more so than your "Sea-girt Isle," Cherokee country, etc.

I feel some curiosity to know where your last castle is. Can Mr. Lewis say nothing in favor of Alabama?

Our Jefferson friends, except Brother, seem to be in a comfortable state of uncertainty as to their future prospects, but I hope they will find they can

get on as well in Jefferson as anywhere else. I incline to Brother's way of thinking, decidedly—that it is as much their own fault as anything else. They will have to take your plan of never lending your name before they can prosper anywhere.

Where is the farm that Dr. Mallory recommends to Phil?

Do pray persuade him to stay where he is. As to Lower Virginia, it may have been something in ages past, but I think its present system will soon ruin any master of a plantation; that is, provided the master owns a good many slaves and a quantity of poor land. But as we cannot agree on this subject, I shall say no more. It is almost time for the mail to come in, and I rather dread it lest I should get no letter.

When I fail to hear from you it seems a long time to wait for the next post. Bob seems determined to write to you by every post, and I feel sometimes half tempted to put him upon his dignity, but he will be mean-spirited in spite of me. Do pray say something about his letters when you write again. He has been quite unwell for a week.

Sister Jane thinks he has had fever for several nights, but I don't know that it amounts exactly to fever; he seems to feel pretty well through the day, and his appetite is as usual, yet he is not exactly himself. Pink is well, and as impudent as she can be. Farewell, my beloved husband; my heart aches to see you. Ever y'rs, M. E. H.

P. S.—I hope you will be able to tell me of many sermons you have heard since we parted.

CHAPTER VII.

LETTERS TO HIS WIFE.

Thursday, December, 1841.

My Dear Wife:

I have been so much engaged in getting lodgings that I have not had a place or opportunity for writing to you before. We are at last settled at Hill's, on Capitol Hill. Mr. Wise, Dr. Mallory, Gilmer, Goode of Virginia, Hubbard of Virginia, Mr. and Mrs. Coles and Governor Pope and his lady. The last we found here when we came, and are quite willing to have them as messmates. I think our messmates and quarters will both prove agreeable. Mrs. Wise has not come on yet and was very ill for many weeks.

So far from these gentlemen having quarreled, as the public prints report, you perceive that they are entirely harmonious. It was exceedingly fortunate that Uncle James got me off on Sunday morning. On Monday the South lost the anti-abolition rule by three votes, and on Tuesday regained it by a majority of two, so that you see that it is always the best for one to keep exactly up to the line of his duty.

As it is, however, all is well. We have saved the rule. I learn from what I believe to be good authority that Mallory is quite safe in his district.

The report as to Wise's speech to his constituents was in many respects false. But in the history I am giving you of my "familiars" you may ask, "Where is County Guy?"

Where is Mr. Calhoun? No tidings of him yet. But our friend Lewis is here, alive and looking exceedingly well.

One reason for my choosing my present position is that I expect to be able to make comfortable arrangements for you here when you come on. A great many of the members have their wives with them, your Cousin Green Pendleton among the number. I have not yet seen John Kennedy. I asked one of the Pennsylvania members if he had brought his wife, and he replied that he had left her slaughtering pork. How unsentimental! He meant, no doubt, that she was attending to putting it up.

I never commenced a session with less spirit in my life. I have met with no companion who is half so agreeable as Bob, and I think so much of home that public affairs have not yet fastened upon my mind. Next week, however, we begin, and by that time I hope to be fairly at work. Give my love to all at home, and kiss the children for me. God bless you, my dear Line. Yours, as ever,

R. M. T. H.

The next letter is written without date or caption.

I was greatly obliged to you, my dearest wife, for your letter, and regret that my letters should have miscarried.

I have generally written twice a week since I have been here, and always once. But the river has been closed with ice and the mails are irregular.

This must account to Sister for not getting an answer to her letter, which reached me but the day before yesterday, and a letter written tomorrow will get to her as soon as one sent yesterday.

I was greatly concerned at your accident and trust that you will be more prudent for the future.

I have been kept anxious for a fortnight now by the letters from home, and even your last was a little gloomy.

This is not your wont, you know. I trust in Him who always sustains those who do so, that we shall soon have a happy meeting and forget past troubles.

I am cultivating a cheerful tone of mind and hope to take home to you quite a stock of good spirits.

I think that the sky is clearing a little for me, and my trust in Providence deepens as I proceed in life.

If I can be useful in my day and generation and see those around me happy and cheerful, my heart will rejoice.

You are wrong in supposing that I was sick. I had a cold which was a little troublesome, but is not so now.

Nor did I lie by even for an hour with it. Do not suppose when you fail to get a letter that I am sick, for I should be more certain to write to you when I was sick than when I was well. I am glad to hear that our dear boy is at last well. I know that he must be very sweet.

By the way, Mr. Holmes was so delighted with a compliment that little Elizabeth paid you that he came to repeat it to me. She had bought a wax doll, which she was describing to him as splendid.

"How splendid?" said he; "what is it like?"

"Oh!" says she, "it is almost as splendid as Mrs. Hunter."

You see that you have won her admiration at least. Give my love to all and tell Sister Jane that I shall soon write to her. Ever yours,

R. M. T. HUNTER.

My Dear Wife:

I am about to be very busy again. A general debate is coming on, in which I may have to take part, and, in addition to that, the particular business of the Finance Committee is no light matter. I therefore write today lest in the multiplicity of engagements I might seem to neglect my dear wife, which I would not do for a great deal.

I wish I were well out of the labors of the next week or two, as I am most anxious for an opportunity to make a flying trip home. I hope, my dear Line, that you are using exercise and taking all care of yourself. How about the preparation of iron and the red blood which Spot says you must make? I hope you have not neglected his injunctions.

We are to have an ascension of a balloon this evening, which I wish the children could see. I missed Franconi entirely. It was either raining or I was busy while he was here.

Today the Countess Sartige has a *matinee dansante*, to which I am invited, but for many reasons I shall not go.

I went last evening to see poor old Mr. Ritchie, who is very feeble, and I think not aware of his condition.

He is as much interested in politics as ever, and, I am told, says kind things of me. The President and I went to call on him, and afterward he insisted on my going with him to visit Mrs. Woodbury and daughters, which I did. The old lady is an evergreen, and one of her daughters pretty and agreeable. But Bev. says I am an evergreen, so I had better make no criticisms on that subject, as they are somewhat suggestive of age.

After the visit to the W.'s was over I went around to Aiken's to a party, but found it consisting wholly of men. I soon retired in disgust, without waiting for the supper, and was in bed at half-past ten. To-day (Saturday) I am hard at work, and tomorrow I fear it must be the same.

I could undertake it all if you were with me, but as it is I feel that I am wasting and throwing away opportunities of happiness in this too long separation. Give my love to all. Y'rs as ever,

R. M. T. HUNTER.

Thursday, February 11, 1848.

My Dear Line:

I have just gotten through with the labor of writing out my speech, and whilst I am waiting for the proofs I avail myself of the opportunity to write to you.

I hope the speech will be out tomorrow. In the meantime I send you a complimentary notice of it in the *New York Herald.* I saw Steve last night. He came over from Baltimore yesterday and returned to Jefferson this morning.

He seemed very well and in fine spirits. He says everything is going on very well at the Bower and

L of C.

seemed anxious to return to Serena. He says that they are about to give the bridal party a dinner at the Bower in a few days, and represents the young couple as devoted to an extent which he evidently thinks ridiculous. What a pity that a few years of matrimony should make sentiment ridiculous! I daresay you and I would laugh as much as Steve, but the sentiment is not gone for all that, either with him or with us.

Mrs. Mason is in town, and Mason has left us for a few days, to be with her at Colonel Cooper's, his brother-in-law. She is a charming woman, the very model of a matron, and sends the kindest messages to you and Mrs. Dandridge. I have been to call on Mrs. ——. Jack told me she was outrageous at my neglect, but I think I propitiated her.

There is a large mess there, who were very much amused at the account which Judge Butler gave them of a dinner that Mason and I gave to Mr. Rives and Mr. Lyons.

On that day we had changed our cook to save money, and such a dinner! It became the jest of the town, and we returned to Walker on the spot. With the exception of that day we have lived remarkably well, but you should have seen Mason's countenance as it passed off. The dessert consisted of one plate of hard, red apples, which Butler said was the "lonesomest dish" that ever he saw upon the table. We gave them another dinner and retrieved the character of our mess's cuisine, but he (Butler) insists that the first dinner was the most

pleasant. Give my love to all, and tell Bob I received his letter and will write to him soon. I was much pleased with it. Y'rs as ever,

R. M. T. HUNTER.

P. S.—Your Cousin Mary was highly delighted with Bob's poetry.

[NO DATE.]

My Dear Wife:

I wish very much that I could see some time ahead of me when I could promise myself a visit home.

I do not like to hear of your headaches and all the work of which you write. Do hire somebody to assist you. We are quite in a stir today at our mess. Mason has undertaken to give a "lunch" at our house to Lord Elgin and suite, the English and French Ministers and the Cabinet. I rather think it will not go off very well, but I do not care much about it. I will help him out as well as I can.

I saw Lord Elgin the other evening at Crampton's, with his sash and star. I thought it looked rather ridiculous; but they say he is a sensible, unostentatious man. It was the Queen's birthnight, so I suppose he was bound to appear in this dress. There is a Sir Charles Gray here, formerly Governor of Jamaica, said also to be a clever man, but the most complete personification of the "Jack of Clubs" you ever saw. From our "lunch" we go to Sartige's to a *matinee dansante*, and thence to Senator Fish's to dine with my lord, so that we have the prospect of much dissipation ahead of us.

I would much rather be at home today, and you do not know how much I want to see you all.

What you say of Bob makes me feel quite old. A young man on our hands is calculated to make us look over our years. I hope that he will fit himself to discharge the duties of manhood by the time that he reaches it. Give my love to all, and believe me,

Yours as ever, R. M. T. HUNTER.

February 17, 1848.

My Dear Line:

I received your letter and was gratified to learn that Muscoe was coming up.

I regret that the arrangement you propose cannot be made. My room is about 12x14, and no room for another bed. Neither is there another spare room in the house.

I will try, however, to see if a room can be obtained near us, so that Muscoe can mess with us. I have lost your proposed plan for the addition. When Muscoe comes I will get him to explain it, but I suspect my plan is best.

If you have much preference for the other plan, see what difference it would make in the cost, and let me know; but I cannot pay much in addition to what I have proposed, as "the beautiful ponies" cost money. I hope they are quite gentle by this time. How do they come on? I feel very lonesome without you here and am determined to arrange it better next session. I go out very little, and my room is so uncomfortable with its stove that I do not spend much time in it. I do most of my work in a committee room in the Capitol, where I now am.

I hope you received my speech. I sent Sister Martha the German paper; tell her the German

stood me in good stead in preparing material for my speech, as the best authority in Mexico is ——[1], a book not yet translated.

Mr. Dix, the Senator from New York, told me that he was going to send copies of my speech to Mr. Cobden, and to others in Europe. Do not tell this out of the family, as it might seem vain. Give my love to all, and tell Mrs. Dandridge that I am hoping to hear she is quite happy at all the good news I wrote last week. Do not let Jimmy and Sarah forget me.

Bob and Pink, I know, will remember me.

Yours as ever, R. M. T. HUNTER.

My Dear Line:

I was glad to hear that James was better, but I could wish that he recovered faster; although it was to be expected that he would have some return of fever.

I wish I were with you. Even my last visit has drawn me more closely to you, if that were possible. Although painful in many respects, some of its recollections are very dear to me.

We are all in excitement and turmoil here. I should not have said *we*, for I do not share in much of it.

Tomorrow the Baltimore Convention meets, and I shall go over for a day as a spectator. The result is quite uncertain. Tell Muscoe I will write to him as soon as it is over, and that he must not be astonished at any result. Tell Sister that the second part of —— is not out yet. I will get the last number of "Dombey" when I return, and send it to her.

[1] Name illegible.

I would much rather be with you than here during the present week, but it will not do to leave. My best love to all. Tell Mrs. Dandridge that Mr. J., of Baltimore, told me he saw Phil Dandridge the other day, and that he was looking remarkably well.

Yours as ever, R. M. T. HUNTER.

July 5, 1850.

My Dear Wife:

This is Sunday morning and I am getting up my correspondence, which I hope to do in time for church.

That is to say, should there be preaching in the Capitol. Our chaplain, Mr. Butler, they say is a fine preacher, and if so I shall endeavor to attend punctually after he commences preaching. I have just returned from a visit to Mr. Calhoun, who has been quite ill with pneumonia. He is much better this morning, I rejoice to say, for we could have illy spared him at this time. They say he is now out of danger.

By the way, we had an adventure yesterday which would have amused you. Signora and Signorita Rosas, wife and daughter of the Mexican Minister, left their cards for our mess in person, whereupon we procured Mr. John Mason, who talks Spanish, and went over en masse to see them. The signorita talks a little broken English, but not enough to make conversation practicable. It is the first time I ever saw James Mason confused. The judge said he was "pompous silence" personified.

These ladies must be more than half Indian, but their manners were pleasant, modest and easy. Next Thursday I shall call on Lady Bulwer. Write me,

my dear Line, how things are going on at home. Give my best love to all and kiss the children for me. Yours as ever,

R. M. T. HUNTER.

In May, 1852, he writes:

My Dearest Wife:

I wish very much that I could get off for a day or two, but the Deficiency Bill hangs on, and I find little time for anything but my official duties. I think my labors have not been useless, and although greater than I like, yet I wish to hold on through the session. Do not suppose, however, that anything can wean me from my wife and family.

I have been struck, as you were, with Mr. Clay's seeming preference for dying here. Judge Butler has returned, and we have determined to move out to the suburbs of the town, to Mr. [name illegible], which is almost in the country.

So far there is much difficulty in the kitchen cabinet. Our cook and chambermaid refuse to forego the attractions of city life, but Isaac carries things with a high hand, and as he is intent upon the removal, I think we shall accomplish it. The quarters are said to be delightful, and we shall be quite alone.

[No date.]

My Dearest Line:

I received your letter today and hope you may have a pleasant trip to Richmond. It is the first attempt you have ever made to be cunning, and you succeed very poorly.

To induce me to refuse a place in the Cabinet, you tell me of the *Richmond Whig,* and its being down on me.

You thought this was a capital hit. I have not seen the pieces, but I am told the *Whig* is quite complimentary and evidently desires that I should go in. But I do not waver in my determination. You have seen, of course, the dreadful calamity which has befallen Pierce. I could not write when such a wound was fresh in his heart. Poor Mr. Lawrence, too, died a day or two after I left Boston. I found a kind note from Winthrop upon my return, regretting that he did not know I was in Boston until the day I left. He said he called to invite me to spend the evening with Thackeray, but I was gone. Muscoe is in good spirits. He hears good news for his political prospects, and I suppose he has written his mother as to what he has learned. Give my love to all. This is the eleventh letter which I have written today, and the longest yet to come. May God bless you, my dear wife.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM 1853 TO 1865.

In 1853, Mr. Hunter declined the first place in the Cabinet, offered him by President Pierce, between whom and himself a cordial friendship existed, and always continued. Family reasons combined with those of a public nature to determine him to this resolve, and he was firm in resisting the wishes of many friends. One of these wrote from Baltimore:

January 12, 1853.

I lamented to hear on my arrival in Washington that you had announced your definitive determination not to go into General Pierce's Cabinet, but, although that intelligence seemed to diminish the importance of the interview I had desired with you, I have heard since my return that you had wished to see me and would be glad to hear from me by letter.

I entertained a great hope of being able, if I had seen you before you formed your final determination, to offer some suggestions which might have led you to a different conclusion.

I did not and scarcely now doubt that you would be enabled to form a Cabinet generally satisfactory to the party and the country at large, and I thought that in the actual posture of the affair your declining to do so would be more perilous to yourself personally and politically, and more mischievous to the

party, than if you had submitted to some disagreeable sacrifices in constructing an Administration. It is, however, I fear, now too late to press or enlarge upon these topics, and I hope you may yet have it in your power to mitigate much of the mischief I had apprehended.

On the same subject, viz., his declining the offered Cabinet position, President Pierce wrote as follows:

ANDOVER, MASS.,

Saturday Evening, January 15, 1853.

My Dear Hunter:

Your letter of the 11th inst. was forwarded to me tonight from Concord. The conclusion to which your mind has been led is rather a matter of regret than disappointment. The field of the country is entirely open to me, you being the only individual to whom it has been even suggested that I should desire their services. There is a great deal of weight in your suggestions. Probity, admitted eminent qualifications, sound principles, unity in sentiment and opinions are what I must secure. I am not tenacious with regard to men.

Although my judgment will probably be formed with regard to the Cabinet before I leave New England, it is quite probable that I may go to Washington as early as the middle of February. I am fully aware that I have no right to claim so much of your time and kindly consideration, still I know your disinterestedness and must urge you to write to me freely upon all such matters as you deem it important for me to weigh.

I have not yet fully recovered from my bodily injuries, and my spirit is almost crushed by this overwhelming bereavement, but I expect to go to Concord on Monday, and hope to be able to gather up my energies for the great responsibilities before me. Yr. friend,

FRANK. PIERCE.

Hon. R. M. T. Hunter, U. S. Senate.

P. S.—I have not seen Mr. Atherton since his return, but expect to see him Monday.

January 31.

My Dear Hunter:

I have been surprised to find among my papers a few moments since the letter you will receive herewith.

From some mistake it was not sent to the office, but it will now account at least for an apparently gross negligence.

I think I shall be able to arrange matters satisfactorily to myself, and in a manner to command the approbation of some judicious, disinterested friends. I have not seen Atherton for several days. He is, like myself, in deep affliction on account of the death of his father and only sister.

In haste, Your friend,

FRANK. PIERCE.

Hon. R. M. T. Hunter, U. S. Senate.

Washington, D. C.

Mr. Hunter was on very friendly terms with President Buchanan, who sought his counsel

on several occasions. We only give one of his notes in attestation of this statement, as they would not be of public interest.

April 9, 1855.

My Dear Sir:

If quite convenient, I should be gratified to see you today on a matter of some importance. I would name 12 M., but if this hour be not convenient, please to appoint another.

Your friend, JAMES BUCHANAN.

Senator Hunter.

The following letters were written in 1858, after Mr. Hunter's oration at the unveiling of Crawford's equestrian statue of Washington:

NEW YORK, May 17, 1858.

My Dear Sir:

I received your oration on Washington, which I have read with exceeding interest. The more his career is studied the more prominent will be his superiority in courage, prudence, judgment and patriotism. I take leave to inclose for you a document which must have an interest for a Virginian—the proceedings of the earliest Legislative Assembly in the Western Hemisphere.

I remain, dear sir, very truly yours,

GEO. BANCROFT.

Mr. Hunter's friend and kinsman by marriage, Mr. Beverly Tucker, then Consul to Liverpool, wrote as follows:

LIVERPOOL, March 15, 1858.

My Dear Hunter:

I offer you my felicitations upon your unequaled—even by yourself—oration. Every effort upon that theme pales before it. Please send Jimmy and Bev. and Ran. pamphlet copies of it. James Ellis Tucker, Beverly D. Tucker, John Randolph Tucker. Don't fail to send your oration to the above named.

BEVERLY TUCKER.

LIVERPOOL, March 18, 1858.

My Dear Sir:

I sent your speech to Mr. Whitty, editor of the *Morning Post*, one of the ablest journals in England. I was much surprised and gratified this morning to find that he had inserted two well-selected columns from it in his paper. This is a high compliment, and, I am told, entirely unprecedented. I do not know the editor of the *Post* personally, but have had a little correspondence with him in a friendly way in reference to his mistaken attacks upon slavery.

I inclose a copy of the *Post* to you, and one to the *Washington Union and Star.*

Yours truly, but in great haste,

BEVERLY TUCKER.

Of his address at the V. M. I. the following notice was written by General Smith to Mr. Letcher:

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE,

January 8, 1858.

To Hon. John Letcher:

My Dear Sir—I send you by today's mail all the copies of Mr. Hunter's address[1] which we have at disposal.

Although we had a very large edition published, the demand has been so great for them that we are reduced to some eight or ten copies. This fact is the highest eulogium to an address which for purity of thought and expression, and clear philosophical reasoning, is unsurpassed by any I ever read.

I saw Mrs. Letcher on Sunday. All well. With kindest wishes, I am, very truly your friend,

FRANCIS H. SMITH.

RICHMOND, April 2, 1858.

Hon. R. M. T. Hunter:

Dear Sir—I am greatly obliged to you for the interesting documents of this and the last session that you have been kind enough to send me, and beg that you will bear me in mind when you have anything of the sort for distribution.

I am also thankful for the copy of your speech on the admission of Kansas. I had previously occupied a portion of the little time I have to spare for politics in reading it. I hope that you will not suspect me of flattery when I say that, in my judgment, it leaves nothing further to be desired on the part

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[1]Address delivered before the two literary societies of the Virginia Military Institute, July 3, 1857, by Hon. R. M. T. Hunter, of Virginia.

of the South. In its thorough analysis of the complex matters discussed, in force of logic and in candor, it stands ahead of anything I have seen yet. I marvel that you can preserve such judicial calmness in view of insolence which at the distance of 130 miles makes the blood boil in the veins of a quiet non-politician like myself.

It certainly is well for us not to lose our temper, since it is the last thing left for us to lose.

Very respectfully yours,

GEORGE W. RANDOLPH.

I have dwelt more in detail on the incidents of Mr. Hunter's life up to the time the war cloud broke upon the South.

He had lived under its shadow, and anticipated the outburst long before others had marked the gathering storm.

In a letter to his sister Jane, without date, but probably written some years before the crisis, he says:

It would be wrong to say that there is not a species of morbid excitement which reaches even me in my present position. I am far, too, from concealing the fact that I take a deep interest in public matters just now. We are on the eve of a great crisis in public affairs, if we are not already in it. The South is not aware of its own position, and can only be warned by degrees. I believe that even twenty men in this body who would act as I am disposed to do could—I will not say save the country, but at least act as a salutary check upon

the excesses of the two great parties who are distracting our country. I believe that the day is not far distant when my course will stand justified by absolute experience.

While Mr. Hunter was not one of the eager secessionists who would have hastened to leave the Union without parley or condition, his hesitation ended with the withdrawal of Virginia from the Federal Government, and he did not wish her to linger a moment longer than the strictest principle of honor demanded.

Foreseeing, as he did, the infinite miseries of the struggle which he so eloquently portrayed in his last speech in the United States Senate, he was anxious to avert the crisis as long as the dignity and honor of his native State permitted; but when Virginia seceded, he resigned his seat in the Senate and threw himself into the interests of the Confederacy with all his energies and abilities. He was soon invited by President Davis to accept the office of Secretary of State of the Confederate States in his second Cabinet, and filled this position until elected in 1862 to the Confederate States Senate, in which body he served until the evacuation of Richmond and the dispersion of the Confederate Government. Public

and private troubles alike pressed upon him from the beginning of the war.

As we have already said, Mr. Hunter's eldest son and namesake came home from the University of Virginia in May, 1861, in the early stages of the fatal disease which ended his brief career in November of the same year, and during this illness his father's enforced absence from home was embittered by public anxieties and responsibilities. It required all his natural fortitude and Christian resignation to bear the crushing blow which destroyed his ambitious hopes and wounded his affections almost in the tenderest point, and it may be truly said that Mr. Hunter was never the same after 1861.

Calamities—public and private—pursued him during the war, for there was no disaster to our arms which he did not feel as personal, and he never hesitated to neglect his own interests in furthering those of his beloved State.

Patriotism was with him not merely an extraneous sentiment, but part and parcel of his being, and almost his last words, addressed to a young friend and relative, were: "Don't forget your country." He was one of the three Confederate Commissioners appointed by Mr.

Davis to treat with Messrs. Lincoln and Seward at the Fortress Monroe Conference, his associates being the Hon. A. H. Stephens, of Georgia, and Hon. John A. Campbell, of Louisiana, ex-Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. Mr. Hunter was one among the prominent men summoned by Mr. Lincoln to meet him in Richmond to confer as to the restoration of Virginia to her relations in the Federal Union, a meeting which was to have been held in April, 1865, but which was prevented by the untimely death of Mr. Lincoln by the hand of a madman.

The Hampton Roads Conference has now become a matter of history, and need not here be entered upon, but the projected meeting with Lincoln in Richmond in April, 1865, is mentioned in the following letter from Mr. Hunter, lately republished by the friend to whom it was addressed.

After some account of the Old Point Conference, Mr. Hunter says:

> I never saw Mr. Lincoln afterwards, but he was in Richmond soon after the surrender, and, Judge Campbell tells me, expressed a great anxiety to see me, as he was under the impression that my name would have some weight with the South, and that he and I together might agree upon some proposition which would bring the warring sections together.

He expressed much confidence in the honesty of my intention and in my influence with the Southern people, but said he could not wait long, as he was obliged to be in Washington by a certain time.

Judge Campbell told him that it was impossible for me to reach Richmond in time to meet him, not knowing that I lived only fifty miles from that city.

Mr. Lincoln went to Washington to meet his death, and Judge Campbell thinks that our meeting might have saved the South much trouble.

Whether this is the case or not, I do not know, but I have always regretted that circumstances prevented our meeting at that time. I do not know that these facts will be of use to you, and, although not designed for publication, you may be able to make some good use of them privately.

Yours truly and respectfully,

R. M. T. HUNTER.

In 1864, Mr. Hunter lost his beloved nephew, M. R. H. Garnett, whom he trusted and consulted in matters personal and political, and whose companionship was most congenial.

To the day of his death he mourned the loss he had sustained in this bereavement. Mr. Garnett had married, in 1860, Miss M. P. Stevens, the daughter of Mr. E. A. Stevens, of Hoboken, New Jersey, and between this lady and Mr. Hunter the most cordial affection existed.

She proved her relation-like feeling, and endeared herself to her husband's family, with whom she was identified.

Mr. Hunter's high character, unimpeached during his long public career, commanded respect from all who knew him, and he possessed the confidence of some of our most distinguished officers, as was shown by their letters during the war.

Among these military friends were General Joseph E. Johnston, whose abilities he rated very highly; General Cobb, of Georgia; General Magruder, and many others.

For our great commander his admiration and respect were unbounded, and the following letter from General Lee shows his trust and confidence in Mr. Hunter:

[CONFIDENTIAL.]

HEADQUARTERS, CAMP FRED.,
February 12, 1863.

My Dear Sir:

I am very much obliged to you for your letter of the 6th inst. and for the interest you take in this army.

Its welfare is the constant subject of my thoughts and causes me anxious days and sleepless nights.

Since its return to Culpepper, in November, in addition to efforts to draw subsistence from the surrounding counties, I have been urging upon the

Department the subject of its future existence, and have hoped that everything has been done that can be. In my visits to Richmond, on two occasions, I personally represented to the Secretary (Mr. Randolph on the first occasion, and Mr. Seddon on the second) the importance of this subject. Recently I sent the Chief Commissary and Quartermaster to Richmond to see personally to this matter. I have, however, adopted your recommendations, and again urged upon the Secretary the necessity of sending competent officers after the meat, and offered to send an officer and men, if necessary, to assist in its transportation across the broken part of the railroad.

I will be extremely obliged to you if you will do what you can in this matter. It will be impossible to maintain our position in front of the enemy, or even to keep our army together, if it cannot be fed. The salt meat is now reduced to a fourth of a pound per man a day—a small allowance when there is but little else besides flour to add to it.

Still we get some fresh meat about every other day—one and a quarter pounds per day to each man—so that half the time the meat ration is sufficient. I have men and cavalry all over western counties—Hampshire, Randolph, Pendleton, Tucker, etc.—collecting cattle, but they are scarce and thin now and ought to be reserved till next summer, when they will be more wanted. As to wheat, all that we can haul is being gathered by our commissaries and sent to Richmond. But forage is so scarce, we have to go such great distances for it,

and the roads are now become so bad that it takes all our transportation to haul provisions to the men and forage to the animals.

We are suffering as much for the latter as the former, and the hard labor, exposure and scarcity of forage are causing us to lose many of our horses. I have been obliged to deprive myself of artillery and cavalry to a great extent and send them off where they can be subsisted. In case of a sudden attack I do not know what I shall do, for the distance they are from me, added to the impracticability of the roads, would render it impossible for them to reach me in time.

I remain very truly yours, R. E. Lee.

Hon. R. M. T. Hunter.

Mr. Hunter's private knowledge of the destitute and precarious condition of our army depressed his spirits, and when rallied by those who did not share this knowledge, or possess his means of information, or his want of hopefulness, he would endeavor to disguise his forebodings and assume a cheerfulness which he was far from feeling.

He realized so vividly all that was involved in the collapse of the Confederacy, the complete ruin—public and private—to all the survivors of the Civil War; and far beyond any individual loss or failure was his grief in witnessing his country's downfall. With a truly prophetic vision he saw the long subjugation that must ensue, and the crushing out of a

noble and independent spirit, for which no restoration of material prosperity could compensate. This may seem exaggerated language, but those who have watched the progress of events will perhaps admit that much of the characteristic Southern nature has disappeared, never to return. While few or none regret the destruction of what has been called our peculiar institution, and while we rejoice in the fact of emancipation, there are points of national character which we cannot lose without deterioration, and which are but indifferently replaced by what is fitly termed "our new departure." The spirit of Southern chivalry, so burlesqued by parody and held up to ridicule, so unfairly represented in the light literature of the day, may be obscured or absolutely destroyed; yet the day may dawn when its loss may be felt, and in time of crisis or danger we may turn in vain appeal from our self-chosen standards of mercantile and material progress to the memory of "a banner with a strange device."

Practical and mechanical abilities are not to be underrated, but as the soul inspires and directs the body, so high aims and unselfish efforts for the general good form the character for real attainment, both moral and material.

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER THE WAR.

At the close of the war Mr. Hunter returned broken in finances to a home desolated by misfortunes of many kinds.

He had lost heavily in the struggle, for, besides the evils of war common to all, a special raid on his property had been organized by order of General B. F. Butler, and some troops were sent in gunboats up the Rappahannock in the summer of 1863. His mill, from which he derived his chief means of support, was burnt to the ground, his horses and cattle were taken, and ruin stared him in the face. These pecuniary losses were, however, overshadowed by family bereavements, and in the spring of 1865 he lost his second daughter, Sarah S. Hunter, a gifted girl, not yet nineteen, who, like her brother Robert, fell a victim to rapid consumption. Her rare talents and unselfish nature had won the love and admiration of her family and friends, and, while still suffering from this loss, Mr. Hunter was arrested in May, 1865, and confined for several months in Fort Pulaski, with the

Hon. James A. Seddon, the last Confederate Secretary of War, and other distinguished Confederates.

The following letter, written in July, more than two months after his capture, shows the philosophy and resignation with which he accepted the situation:

FORT PULASKI, July 30, 1865.

My Dear Daughter:

I received letters from your mother and yourself, which were both dated on the 17th of this month.

I begin to receive letters more frequently, and you may imagine how much they gratify me when they come.

You say you are constantly imagining my employments and picturing to yourself how I am feeling. The life of a captive is so monotonous that it would not be difficult to give you its history while I am here. I have much time for reading and reflection, and I hope I shall not throw away the opportunity. Although the lessons of misfortune are often very severe, still they have their uses, and it depends upon yourself whether you may not find some compensation for them. If they are sent by God, there is surely some good use to be made of them, so that you must all keep up your spirits and your courage. Indeed, if my friends are right in the encouraging letters which they send me, there is reason to hope that my release is not very distant. It is true that my own hopes have been constantly

disappointed, but I will not despond or despair. On the 17th Mr. Seward wrote me that he would soon call the attention of the President to my case.

When he sees Governor Pierpont's request for my release and examines the other papers I think he must agree to my discharge on parole. Your mother says that my friends are very active, which is very gratifying information, and if they keep up their exertions they will be successful.

You say that the boys are very energetic—James in attending to my affairs, and the others busy with their studies.

Your mother says very little of the farm and nothing of the mill. Perhaps there was nothing pleasant to say, but still I would like to hear. Tell her I cannot make plans for her at this distance; she will have to manage for herself. But I wish I was at home and could reduce my affairs to order.

Good-bye, my dear child, and give my best love to all. Tell the boys to write to me, and you must all write often. Your affectionate father,

R. M. T. H.

P. S.—Mr. Seddon sends warm regards to the family. He is as well as usual.

Two days before the last letter was written Mr. Hunter's family had sustained another crushing misfortune.

His youngest son, Muscoe R. G. Hunter, called after M. R. H. Garnett, was drowned on the 28th of July, 1865, while bathing with some other boys. This promising boy of fifteen was thought to resemble his father in per-

son and disposition, and was especially beloved by him, so that the blow fell with stunning force. His faith in Providence and natural fortitude never deserted him, and the time of his release from imprisonment was now approaching. The efforts and intercessions of friends, both Northern and Southern, had been unremitting, and in August, 1865, Dr. Dandridge, of Cincinnati, came to Essex and took his sister, Mrs. Hunter, to Washington, thinking the time favorable for her personal intercession. In interviews with the President and Mr. Seward, Mrs. Hunter exerted her influence and powers of persuasion so effectually that she gained the cause she pleaded, and Mr. Hunter always attributed his release to her. He now returned home, and, as Mr. Micou writes: "Devoted himself to study and to agricultural pursuits, seldom participating in public affairs. His speech in New York City in the Presidential canvass of 1872, and an occasional appearance in his own State, are the only instances now recalled." At the close of the war, some of Mr. Hunter's friends, notably General Roger A. Pryor, who had himself been so successful in adapting his brilliant faculties to a new career, advised him

to remove to a city and practice law, but his heart was inalienably devoted to his home and State.

He was very tenacious of friendships and intimacies, and in the course of a long and varied life he rarely lost a friend by his own fault. Two of his friends, the late Hon. Lewis E. Harvie and Colonel Frank Ruffin, were highly valued, and no change of party or difference in political opinion weakened their mutual regard.

Among his chosen friends was Mr. L. Q. Washington, who always showed him respect and affection, and their long correspondence attests their unbroken attachment and esteem for each other. In 1874, Mr. Hunter was elected by the Legislature Treasurer of Virginia, and discharged the duties of this office until January, 1880, when he was defeated for re-election in consequence of the triumph of what was then called the Readjuster party. While living in Richmond, Mr. Hunter added new friends to his list, and Mrs. J. G. Cabell, especially, treated him with the affectionate kindness of a relation. To Dr. Hunter McGuire he was also indebted for much kindness and attention both to himself and family, and he always retained a grateful sense of these benefits.

Some of Mr. Calhoun's friends wrote to Mr. Hunter during his tenure of office in Richmond, urging him to write a life of the great South Carolinian; but, while no work would have been more congenial to him in the prime of life and health, his energies and fortunes were alike unequal at this time to what would once have been a labor of love.

No more ardent friend and admirer of the eminent statesman ever lived, and in 1843 Mr. Hunter had published a short political biography of Mr. Calhoun. He often said how much pleasure he would take in writing a full and adequate memoir of one who had been his personal friend, as well as his guide and counselor in politics.

But his mind was too much occupied by pecuniary and domestic troubles to admit of any sustained literary effort, and he reluctantly declined a task which he thought could be more worthily executed by another. An occasional article on some public question, such as his letter to Hon. L. Q. C. Lamar, on the Texas and Pacific Railway, in 1876, was the extent of his work outside of his official and private duties, but the following letters from friends show that they knew his interest in them and their affairs unabated:

From Professor Holmes:

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, March 15, 1875.

Hon. R. M. T. Hunter, Richmond, Va.:

Dear Sir—I should have written sooner to request you to accept shelter in my tent and such attention as the times permit on your visit to the university at the semi-centennial, but I waited for assurance that I would not interfere with the arrangements proposed by the committee of the alumni.

It affords me great pleasure to be able now to extend to you a cordial invitation and to state that I consider myself to have a special claim to the honor of entertaining you on such an occasion. The chair which I hold has been occupied only by myself; it was established by your patient urgency—it was distinctly your creation. You drew the large lines of its orbit, within which I have been lost for so many years. There is something appropriate in according me the only opportunity of rendering suitable homage to the Constituter of the Chair. I hope for an early and favorable reply, and remain with high respect and regard,

Dear sir, your obedient servant,

GEO. FREDERICK HOLMES.

From his friend and former classmate at the University, Professor H. Tutwiler, he received the following letter, the interest of which explains its insertion:

GREENE SPRING, ALA., May 13, 1875.

My Dear Sir:

I received a few days since a letter from a Mr. Ingram, of London, asking me if I could give him

any information about Edgar Poe, particularly in regard to his career at the University of Virginia.

He says that Mr. Long gave him my name and address as that of one likely to be able to assist him in writing a New Memoir of Poe, a prospectus of which I inclose.

Mr. Long also mentioned your name as having been a student at the same time, and Mr. Ingram begs me to procure for him "any anecdote or recollection, however trifling it may seem, of his ways and conduct." I should be glad to aid Mr. Ingram, but I know nothing of Poe at the university, except that he was a student (so called) for a short time while I was there. Alibone, in his "Dictionary of Authors," has made some glaring mistakes. "That he was adopted by a kind-hearted merchant—Mr. Allan, of Baltimore; was sent to the University of Virginia in 1822, where he was equally distinguished as a scholar, an athlete and a debauchee. In the first named capacity he elicited the respect of the tutors; in the second, the envy and admiration of his fellow students; in the third, he offended the academical authorities and was expelled."

If you know anything about Poe, or can refer me to any one now living who knew him at the university, I shall be glad to communicate the facts to Mr. Ingram, who seems to be a very zealous and ardent admirer of Poe. In his letter to me he mentions the names of Steward (Stuart?), a Dr. Ambler, Mr. Thos. Bolling, and others, and in conclusion he says, "I need scarcely remark that I shall be only too glad to purchase or pay for anything relating to my inquiries."

I have corresponded with Mr. Long very regularly ever since he left the university. He was, as you know, in strong sympathy with the South during the war. You have no doubt seen his "Antoninus" and the noble tribute which he pays to General Lee in the preface. He sent a copy of this work to General Lee through me, and in acknowledging the receipt of the General's letter, which was also transmitted through me, he says, "If I were not detained here by circumstances, I would cross the Atlantic to see the first and noblest man of our day." He then adds, "I did not answer General Lee's letter because I thought that he is probably troubled with many letters. If ever you should have occasion to write to him, I beg you will present to him my most respectful regards and a hope that he will leave some commentaries, to be placed on the same shelf with Caesar's"; and then adds, "I am afraid he is too honest to do this." Mr. Long finished last year the last and fifth volume of his "Decline of the Roman Republic." It is to me the most interesting history I have ever read of that period. The last volume contains the history of the Civil Wars and the events to Caesar's death.

He says that he took the greatest pains with this volume and is well satisfied with the results.

It is a pity that the book is so costly—about $7.00 a volume. I suppose it will not be republished in the United States on account of his severe strictures on the Federal Government for its war against the South. His "Antoninus" was published by Bohn, and so cheaply that they could not republish it at the North.

You will be glad to know that Mr. Gladstone in 1873 gave Mr. Long a pension of £100 a year on the civil list. He says it came to him without his asking for it (which he could not have done) and contrary to his expectation.

I have always followed with much interest your distinguished career both before and since the war, and read with much pleasure everything from you. I was interested in your report on taxation and should like to see a perfect copy of it.

With kindest regards and best wishes,

I am, very truly your friend,

H. Tutwiler.

P. S.—If you ever see the *Churchman,* published in Hartford, you may be interested to know that the contributions of J. S. T., published last year and continued this year, are written by one of my daughters, who is at Steglitz, near Berlin, and has been in Germany nearly two years.

From Miss Randolph:

Shadwell Depot, Albemarle County, Va.,
Edgehill, November 2, 1875.

Dear Mr. Hunter:

I am afraid from my silence that you have thought we did not appreciate your beautiful notice of our father as much as we do. Mr. Taylor, however, missed getting the number of the *Whig* which contained it, and we did not see the piece until my nephew had some copies of it struck off and sent to us. These we did not get until a few days ago.

I cannot express to you, without seeming exaggeration, our great gratification at your eloquent tribute to our father's memory. The subject, the

writer and the result are worthy of each other, and it is pleasant to us to know that this offering of friendship from you to one so dear to us is a composition which of its kind would do honor to any pen. With sentiments of the sincerest respect and affectionate regard, I am, dear sir,

Yours most respectfully,

SARAH N. RANDOLPH.

In May, 1880, the retired statesman lost his sister Jane, whose death left him the last survivor of the large family with whom he commenced life, and in June, 1881, he was called upon to suffer a final and desolating bereavement.

His youngest and tenderly loved daughter Evelyn, her mother's namesake, and special darling, died after a slow decline, an irreparable loss to her family, whose affections were chiefly centered in her. Lovely and beloved, she attracted all who knew her by her graces of mind and person.

Neither parent rallied from this blow, which broke the springs of life at a period when hope no longer encourages us to cherish visions of future pleasure. In 1885, Mr. Cleveland appointed Mr. Hunter Collector of the Port of Tappahannock, a position which he held at the time of his death.

The last years of his life were uneventful and devoted to home interests, especially those relating to his mill, which had been burned again in 1881.

Owing to Mr. Hunter's exhausted finances, he could not have rebuilt it but for a timely loan from an unknown friend. In Mr. Micou's words, when concluding the sketch, now almost wholly incorporated in these pages:

"There have been few men in this country whose public career extended over a longer period, or who filled so many exalted positions with such conspicuous ability.

"In private life he was distinguished for his simplicity of manner, his amiability and purity of character, and for the philosophy and equanimity with which he bore the reverses of fortune, as he was in public for his fervent patriotism, his unsurpassed ability, and his fidelity to duty.

"No citizen of this or any other age has left a more stainless record, or is more worthy of having the memory of his services and virtues perpetuated in enduring bronze, and his example transmitted as a rich legacy to posterity.

"Lee, the great soldier, at Lexington, teaching the youth of Virginia, by precept and

example, and Hunter, the great civilian, superintending his mill in Essex, illustrated by their lives the grand maxim of the former, 'Human fortitude should be equal to human calamity,' and present to us a picture more touching and beautiful of that tranquil old age which follows a life devoted to duty, than that drawn by the pen of Cicero in his famous treatise on the subject."

Three years before his death, Mr. Hunter was desperately ill with erysipelas, and his constitution never recovered from the shock. He weakened visibly, and in the summer of 1887 it became evident that his days were numbered.

In May, 1887, he received the following letter from his old friend, Hon. Lewis E. Harvie, who was evidently unaware of his condition, which precluded any idea of his giving an entertainment, even if his birthday had not passed:

CHULA DEPOT, VA., May 8, 1887.

My Dear Hunter:

I observed in the Richmond paper yesterday that you and Mrs. Hunter propose to give an entertainment to your friends on the occasion of your 78th birthday.

On the 50th anniversary of my marriage, three years ago, an entertainment was given to my friends.

These assemblages recall to my recollection the fact that we were at the university together, and from that time to the present we have never had a jar or a jostle.

We entered public life together—first, in the Legislature of Virginia; subsequently you were elected to the lower house of Congress. We were bosom friends, and since then until your retirement from public life we have never once differed, as far as I recollect. I nearly succeeded while I was in the Legislature in sending you to the United States Senate, although I had but four votes in the State Senate. The joint order had to be broken to prevent it. I was called to account for it by the largest meeting that ever assembled in my county, which I defied; and against the strongest man in the county was returned by an overwhelming popular majority, although I gave notice to every voter of my purpose to elect you.

I did elect you at the next session to the Senate, and gave you one of the noblest gentlemen in the State as a colleague. He is dead, but you and I are still alive, with our relations unchanged and unchangeable. I am nearly blind and deaf and am unable to read at present. And, therefore, for food for reflection I am driven to a review of the past.

Hence this letter. So far as you and I are concerned, our past is closed and we have no future. I wish to inform you of what you may not be apprised, that the office of State Treasurer, from which you were removed, was offered to me, with an absolute certainty of election, and I not only peremptorily refused it but announced the fact in

the papers by my own authority. I wish to remind you of this (if you have forgotten it) before we die, as evidence of my warm personal regard. It seems to me that, among other changes which have taken place amongst public men, personal friendship has ceased to exist, and that love of country has gone to the tomb along with it. With cordial esteem and regard for Mrs. Hunter, I am still your friend,

Hon. R. M. T. Hunter, Lloyds, Va.

LEWIS E. HARVIE.

P. S.—Poor Mason! I loved him, too, as a friend, and Mrs. Mason telegraphed me instantly the news of his death.

He was a worthy descendant of George Mason.

CONCLUSION.

For several months before his death, Mr. Hunter's failing health had prevented any attention to business, and he could take very little exercise. He was conscious of his approaching end, and met the last enemy with the calmness and fortitude which had distinguished his life.

He left messages of love and kindness for those of his family and friends who were not with him, and then quietly awaited the closing scene. It came on Monday, July 18, 1887, and he was buried at Elmwood, in the family cemetery.

His beloved wife survived him for a few years, and in May, 1893, was laid beside him. Of her it has been fitly said that she made the world happier in passing through it, and her gracious memory dwells in the hearts of all who knew her.

ADDENDA.

Among Mr. Hunter's published efforts after the war were his speech in Richmond, August 22, 1873, in favor of conservative nominees for State offices; speech before the Southern Historical Society in Richmond, Virginia, October 27, 1874; letter to the Editor of the *Whig*, March 11, 1878.

ROBERT M. T. HUNTER

AN ADDRESS ON HIS LIFE

(Prepared for the Hunter Monument Association)

BY

COL. L. QUINTON WASHINGTON

Gentlemen:

SOME six years ago, in the town of Fredericksburg, I had the honor to preside over a meeting composed of influential citizens of this Commonwealth, when the initial steps were taken to organize an association for the purpose of removing the remains of the Hon. R. M. T. Hunter from their place of burial in Essex county, Va., to the capital of the State, at Richmond; and of erecting a monument at the tomb; and also of arranging such other testimonials of respect for his eminent public character and services as might be deemed appropriate. It is due to the Hon. J. B. Sener, of Fredericksburg, to state here that he was, so far as I know, the first person to suggest such action; and he has, with others, steadily cherished and promoted the consummation of this praiseworthy purpose. The Chair, by authority of the meeting, appointed a committee whose duty it was to obtain from the General Assembly of Virginia a special charter of incorporation, for themselves and other citizens to be associated with them, to carry out the design of the meeting. That committee consisted of the following gentlemen:

Hon. T. R. B. Wright, of Essex; St. George R. Fitzhugh, Judge J. B. Sener, Rufus B. Merchant, and Hon. J. H. Kelly, of Fredericksburg; William F. Drinkard, Joseph Bryan, William Ryan, Rev. Dr. John B. Newton, General Archer Anderson, Colonel Frank G. Ruffin, and Judge Waller R. Staples, of Richmond; Ex-Governor Fitzhugh Lee, of Glasgow; Judge William J. Robertson, of Charlottesville; General Eppa Hunton, of Warrenton; Major Holmes Conrad, of Winchester; Hon. John Goode, of Norfolk, and Hon. Taylor Berry, of Amherst.

Most of these gentlemen were personal friends of the deceased statesman, but there was no purpose of limiting the committee, except to representative Virginians.

This committee met at Richmond on December 2, 1891, and were aided by the presence and counsel of a number of distinguished gentlemen, including members of the General Assembly of Virginia. General Joseph R. Anderson was elected chairman, and a committee was appointed to draft a charter of incorporation. The organization was afterwards perfected by the selection of a Board of Directors, with Dr. G. Watson James as secretary, and Colonel William H. Palmer as treasurer of the association.

This body was incorporated by the General Assembly by act approved February 2, 1892, and all the powers then deemed necessary to promote the object were conferred upon the corporation.

I need not dwell upon the impoverishment of many worthy citizens of Virginia, and the other causes which have impeded and postponed the execution of the objects for which this association was formed. The question for us today is, Can these obstacles be removed and our design consummated? It will not fail. It must not fail. We meet here today in the very county in which Robert M. T. Hunter was born, and where his home was; in the county that he loved; among the very people, or their children, whom he loved and respected, and whose unfailing confidence was to him always an inspiration and a just source of pride; to further this tribute to the most distinguished son of Essex. There can be no honor paid to his memory that does not also reflect honor upon this old county on the Rappahannock and upon the Commonwealth of Virginia.

I would not be justified in obtruding upon your patience a full and complete account of Mr. Hunter's life and public services. That duty devolves upon his biographer, and the

future historian who shall faithfully narrate the history of the country from the year 1836 down to the time when the conquest of the Southern States relegated so many of their eminent sons to poverty and private station. But surely I may be permitted in brief phrase to glance at the distinguished, influential and useful part borne by this great, but modest, Virginian during the critical era in which his life was cast. It was often a time that tried men's souls, and only the pure gold survived the crucible.

Mr. Hunter was born in this little county on the 21st April, 1809. It is a country neighborhood, without a city or a large town, sparsely settled in his time and ours. I am aware, and probably you are, that there is a modern school of thought which assumes that for an intellectual growth a man should be born and reared in a city or a closely settled neighborhood—a hothouse, so to speak, in which his brain and energies are to be stimulated to the highest degree. But history gives little warrant for such an assumption. The great men of this country certainly were nearly all of them country bred. Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Calhoun, Patrick Henry, John Marshall, George Mason, John Randolph, Henry Clay, Henry A. Wise, Abel P. Upshur, William

C. Rives, Silas Wright, Thomas H. Benton, Andrew Jackson, Francis P. Blair, Abraham Lincoln, William J. Bryan, and many more I could adduce were the product of country life—of plantation life, and almost without exception had not only the plantation manners in which dignity and good breeding were happily blended, but possessed also the genius and force in affairs which plantation life and duties had tended to develop. You do not find the best trees among those which are crowded close together. Individuality, self-reliance, decision, thoughtfulness, study, gentleness, charity, truth, purity of morals—all these noblest adjuncts to mental growth and distinction flourish on the farm far better than in the heat and dust and turmoil of the great city with its wealthy few and unfortunate multitude. Born on the plantation, loving nature and honest country folk, our great statesman was through his entire public career always happy and eager to return to his home and native air in Essex. He did not linger in Washington, or even Richmond, longer than his public functions absolutely required.

So, if I were called on to specify the formative influences of Mr. Hunter's character, I should certainly include country life, planta-

tion life, and influences, association and sympathy with the country people of Virginia, the fireside and historical traditions of the old Commonwealth, the study of history, and especially of Virginia history, and of the character and teachings of her great men. He was proud of them all in his own modest, gentle way; and to the very last very proud of the Commonwealth which had called him so often to her service, and called him because he represented perfectly and fully the best type of Virginia character and principles.

Mr. Hunter was, indeed, fortunate in those surroundings and early associations which go so far to shape character and to develop a sure and healthful growth of every faculty. He was extremely fortunate also in being an alumnus of that grand institution of learning, the University of Virginia—the favorite child of the illustrious Jefferson, the first university of this country, and very long the only one, and the first, as I conceive, to embody in our land the breadth, wise liberality, thoroughness of culture and high standards of scholarship and character, which were needed to equip a young man for a great professional or political career. This scholastic training, the fruits of which pervade all Mr. Hunter's public addresses, was

followed by the study of law at Winchester under the invaluable direction of Judge Henry St. George Tucker.

His public life began when he was 25 years of age. He was elected a member of the General Assembly of Virginia. Young as he was, we find them discussing the more serious and difficult questions of finance and banking. The great political questions on which parties were dividing also came before the Legislature, as they had done often in the old days. Mr. Hunter met these issues upon a consistent theory of constitutional construction and policy, yet one of perfect independence from extremes of party bigotry and dictation. He aimed only to get the truth and to be right. At the very outset and in the very flush and ardor of youth, he displayed the moderation and equipoise which characterized his career to the close.

He was then, as always, an advocate of a strict construction of the Federal Constitution and of States' rights. He regarded these ideas as the very foundation-stone of political liberty and good government. The special friends of that creed first elected him to Congress in the year 1837. He took a part in the debates of the House. How well he bore himself may be

judged by the fact that at the very next Congress he was chosen Speaker of the House of Representatives. He was then only 30 years of age. Among his predecessors in this very high office were Nathaniel Macon, Henry Clay, Langdon Cheves, Philip P. Barbour, Andrew Stevenson, John Bell and James K. Polk. Polk was his immediate predecessor as Speaker. To the next Congress Mr. Hunter was again chosen a representative. In this body he had occasion to discuss all the great party questions of the day which preceded the sectional question—the last a mere cloud in the sky at that day, but destined soon to loom up and obscure the entire horizon. Thrown by a new apportionment into a partially new congressional district, he was beaten as a candidate for the Twenty-eighth Congress by a small majority; but two years afterwards he was easily elected to the twenty-ninth Congress. This was the first Congress of Mr. Polk, whom he had helped to elect to the presidency. In this Congress he promoted the establishment of the Independent Treasury—a measure strongly opposed, but which vindicated itself and soon ceased to be a party issue. He also earnestly supported the celebrated revenue tariff bill of 1846, known in after years as the Walker tariff; and he also

favored the warehouse system. The last measuse was largely, if not wholly, his work. Its vast importance and place in modern commercial transactions is known to every merchant in the land; but how few of them know and are grateful to the statesman who did most to give it a permanent place in our fiscal system! On the subject of the tariff Mr. Hunter followed the teachings of Adam Smith, Ricardo, McCulloch, and the great political economists of Europe, whose works have built up the doctrine of free exchange of products, upheld in this country by Jefferson, Calhoun, Silas Wright, and numbers of our greatest thinkers and patriots, and held abroad by Peel, Cobden, Bright, Bastiat and Gladstone.

In the same Congress he actively and most wisely promoted the retrocession of Alexandria to Virginia—a policy dear to every heart in the Commonwealth, and destined, as I hope, never to be surrendered at the bidding of alien speculators and jobbers. The long and dangerous contention with England over the Oregon boundary was also settled at this Congress by the wise and patriotic statesmanship of Webster, Calhoun and Benton. In this patriotic work Mr. Hunter co-operated. But it required no common nerve and sagacity for a public

man to take then a position which all can now see and admit was the very essence of wisdom and statecraft. It was a race for empire, and our country, with greatly inferior naval power and no easy land communication at that hour across the Continent, has won the race. We sacrificed a pawn to win a queen. A war with England at that time might have cost us Oregon and the whole coast.

By this time—1846—the war with Mexico had begun, and the slavery agitation had broken out afresh by the claim of the anti-slavery agitators to apply the Wilmot proviso interdicting the carrying of slaves to any country which might be acquired from Mexico as the result of a successful war. Mr. Hunter cherished the union of the States, and he loved peace always; but, pacific as he was by nature and principle, he would not consent to any measure that destroyed the equality of the Southern States in the Federal Union. At that very hour two-thirds of the soldiers, imperilling their lives for the country in the Mexican war, were from the South, and more than half the others were Democrats who disapproved of the abolition crusade. Perhaps, however, I ought to bear in mind that ingratitude is the cardinal principle of modern politics.

In 1846 Mr. Hunter was elected by the General Assembly to the United States Senate. He took his seat in December, 1847. As a result of the reputation he had already acheived in the other branch of Congress, he was placed on the Finance Committee—by far the most important committee of the Senate, and the one having charge then not only of all revenue measures, but also of all the appropriations of the National Government. At the session of 1850-51 Mr. Hunter became the chairman of the Finance Committee. "The revenue is the State," said a great statesman of the Old World.

Mr. Hunter's tastes and studies fitted him especially for all this class of questions. To recount his work upon them would be impossible. He filled this position up to the spring of 1861, when he left the Senate. On all the questions and topics belonging to this committee he had the unbounded confidence of his brother senators of every party and section. His integrity, purity and knowledge of affairs gave him an almost absolute veto on everything corrupt, base or dangerous in fiscal legislation. He was deemed a safe, conservative man; a watch-dog of the Treasury—not a mere barking dog, but a faithful and incorruptible sentinel. He shaped and carried through the com-

promise tariff bill of 1857—a measure supported not only by the Democrats, but by many prominent Northern Republicans; by William H. Seward, Henry Wilson, N. P. Banks, Salmon P. Chase, and others. They were content to follow a Virginian of the Virginians. His statement of what any provision in a bill he had in charge meant or effected was enough. His candor and truth were a power and a pillar of fire. You have today at Washington a great court to examine and consider claims against the United States Government. The government creditor, instead of vainly hanging around Congress and growing gray-haired in a hopeless quest for justice, has his "day in court." Search the history of this court and you find its sure prop and pillar, the life tenure of its judges, is the proposition of your man of Essex. He helped to breathe into it the breath of life and to organize it upon an enduring and impregnable basis of judicial impartiality and independence.

You hear much nowadays of "civil-service reform" and of applying the merit system to all minor and clerical employments of the Federal Government. Who was the first man to move in this matter? I answer that one of the first to agitate the subject, the one who

made it a hobby from year to year, and who finally formulated a wise and practical measure to effect it, was again your man of Essex—R. M. T. Hunter. It passed in his very words, and thus became the law of the land. It is a sound, sensible, moderate and constitutional measure. If it were the law today, and duly enforced and had never been tampered with by demagogues and ignorant men, it would secure efficient employees for the government, protect their tenure better than your present law, protect also the best interests of the government, and it would be an admirable substitute for the present bastard system of cant and hypocrisy, doubtful in its constitutionality, and almost universally regarded as having sunk into evasion, trickery and fraud, with features that no sensible business-man, no president of a bank or manager of a business establishment ever acts upon in private life. I say, therefore, that we are indebted to Mr. Hunter for the only good law ever passed upon this subject.

We have had on two continents, and especially on this continent, a long and heated controversy over the coinage question. It has engaged the intellects of the ablest men in modern times. In 1851, 1852 and 1853, long before parties ever divided on this question, Mr. Hunter, as

chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, found it in his pathway and dealt with it exhaustively. Rejecting the shallow Mine-Bureau plan of Mr. Secretary Corwin—an echo of the British system of coinage, not offensively, but simply ignoring it—he formulated a measure regulating the coinage which passed the Senate unanimously, without debate, precisely as he wrote it and upon his sole *ipse dixit.* Next, but after some delay, this identical measure passed the House of Representatives and became a law in February, 1853—to remain the law of the land without question or cavil from Presidents Pierce, Buchanan, Lincoln, Johnson and Grant. Such was his power in the United States Senate in a period of fierce party strife on a great organic and economic question, opposing, as he did then, the Secretary's recommendation. I have heard or read this coinage debate from 1874, when it began, till now, over twenty years of parliamentary struggle, and if I were called upon to name a document which best expounds the true principles of finance and statesmanship on this difficult subject, and in a perfectly unanswerable manner, free from ill-temper or bias and full of wise prescience and overwhelming argument, I should name the report made by Robert M. T. Hunter in March,

1852, to the United States Senate, which accompanied the bill proposed by him to regulate the gold and silver coinage.

Mr. Hunter spoke also on foreign affairs as such questions came up. He was conservative by nature and habit. He did not love or desire sectional controversy, but in that trying period of agitation and controversy he stood by the institutions, the civilization and the constitutional rights of the South. He did this without sectional or personal rancor, but with a firmness, learning, eloquence and argumentative power that made him second to none in the debate. The very men who voted against him on these sectional questions never impugned his motives or questioned his ability, and on the fiscal and administrative questions which were especially confined to his care they trusted him far more than they trusted each other. Can you imagine a more splendid triumph of Virginia mind and character?

I have preferred to speak not so much of his stand on party or sectional questions as on measures and policies where he acted with or led men of both parties. This sketch is but a passing glance at a long, laborious and brilliant career. Mr. Calhoun, Mr. Clay and Mr. Webster all left the Senate, or died in the Senate,

about 1851 or 1852. When this grand triumvirate had departed there were yet many strong men who served in that body with Mr. Hunter from 1850 to 1861 who have made a great impress upon our history. I need hardly mention such great names as Senators Mason, Toombs, Jefferson Davis, Benjamin, Stephen A. Douglas, Seward, Sumner, Chase, Trumbull, Bayard, Slidell and Crittenden. Yet I can truthfully assert that of this list of very able men not one was superior in general, all-'round ability to Mr. Hunter; not one was his equal in legislative force and influence; not one was so universally confided in and trusted. Since the passing away of Jefferson, Madison, Marshall and Monroe hardly any Virginian has borne so influential a part in political affairs as R. M. T. Hunter, and certainly no Virginian has done so in the Federal Congress, though the Commonwealth has had many sons who were wise and eloquent in council. To be pre-eminent, or even prominent, in such a galaxy as hers, demanded the very highest qualities of mind and character.

When the great and regrettable contest between the North and the South arose, Mr. Hunter held that the South was simply standing on her constitutional rights. He held that it was

her right and duty to resist aggression. He stated his position in temperate, thoughtful, conciliatory, but firm, language. At no time of his life did he for one moment doubt the perfect justice and truth of the Southern cause. I met and conferred with him frequently during the winter of 1860-61, preceding the civil conflict. Gladly would he have welcomed a settlement between the contending States on the firm basis of constitutional rights for both sections, safety for his own people, malice and injury to none, and an enduring peace with honor. That was not to be. He left the Senate in March, 1861, following not the suggestions of personal ambition or his own interest, but the hard and rugged path of duty. Very soon afterwards the Commonwealth of Virginia sent him as one of her representatives to the new government at Montgomery. He performed that mission. On the 21st of July, 1861, he was called by President Davis to take the position of Secretary of State for the Confederacy, from which Mr. Toombs, of Georgia, had resigned. He filled that important trust with eminent ability until the new, or "permanent," Confederate Constitution and Government went into operation on the 22d of February, 1862.

Prior to that event the Commonwealth of Virginia elected Mr. Hunter, and as I remember, unanimously, to the Confederate Senate. It was a most critical period and demanded the greatest ability and resource, both in the executive and legislative departments of the already hard-pressed Confederacy. Mr. Hunter was made president *pro tempore* of the Senate. His influence was great and commanding. His advice, counsel and influence were not only felt and welcomed in all the great measures of military defense and equipment then adopted, but even in the selection of officers for important commands. He was a steady friend of President Davis in respect to all the great measures of defense and supply. He had the friendship and confidence of Mr. Davis and his Cabinet; of James A. Seddon, John A. Campbell, Graham, Cobb, Lamar, Curry, Letcher, Bocock, Harvie, Caperton, Joe Johnston and Robert E. Lee. He was one of the first to discover and appreciate the superb genius of Stonewall Jackson. He counselled often with Robert E. Lee, relied on his ripe judgment, and gave him his fullest support. In all fiscal and economic measures he naturally took the lead. Respecting and trusting Secretaries Memminger and Trenholm, he, nevertheless, originated all the

general features of Confederate finance. With an infant republic, compelled by a powerful adversary to incur an enormous war expenditure, and not able to export its surplus products or even fully to raise them for the markets, it is not strange that Confederate money should have sunk to so low an ebb as it finally did. The only wonder is that it did not fall much earlier and more rapidly. We may recall with instruction and profit the fate of the assignats of the French Revolutionary Government and of the Continental money of our first Confederacy of 1776. Had the second Confederacy proved a military success, as did the first one, and as the first French republic did, possibly the fertile mind of Hunter might have been able to devise some solution of the financial problem based on ripe experience and a study of modern conditions; but after four years of noble and fearful struggle against gigantic odds, our righteous cause went down in gloom and disaster. All was lost save honor. The public careers of Hunter, Davis, Lee, and many more, were virtually closed at this point; but their names, the memories of their splendid services, their virtues, and, still more, their sacrifices, will never be forgotten by the people of the South or by the pen of history.

Mr. Hunter realized towards the close of the struggle the hopelessness of a protracted contest, and he was anxious to do something to save the South from total subjugation and a conquest without any terms of peace. The problem proved an impracticable one, for reasons on which I may speak another time, but his motives were humane, disinterested and pure, as they always were. The blame for failure belongs to the ambitious men at Washington, who, seeing final victory almost in their grasp, would not spare either Southern misery or Northern blood in their stern purpose to become absolute masters of the situation. The Government of the Union being thus re-established by the sword, Mr. Hunter regarded it as his duty to accept the Union in good faith, and, as a good citizen, to co-operate with patriotic men in every section to restore the reign of law and order and the Federal Constitution. This was the sentiment of Virginia and the South. It was deeply unfortunate that this sentiment was not at once recognized and acted on by the dominant party, instead of adopting, as they did, the policy of hate, military rule and disfranchisement. Men like Hunter, Campbell, Baldwin, Stephens and Lee ought to have been invited to public positions to help to restore the old Union, and then,

instead of a vulgar sectional conquest, keeping the South as a mere province for long, weary years, to be harried and plundered and lied about, there would have been a genuine restoration of the Union and a rapid growth of the old national feeling, in which consists the real strength of the republic. Well did the eloquent Kossuth say: "Hatred is no good counsellor." No government built on hate can stand, or ought to stand.

In this sketch I have omitted much and I have elaborated nothing. A regard for your time, and for the superior knowledge of many of those around me, admonishes me to be as brief as possible. I will not close, however, without averring my belief that not even George Washington himself (to whose character and services Mr. Hunter has rendered the most original and instructive tribute ever uttered by man) was more pure, disinterested and patriotic than he was in his public action. Gentleness, charity and truth were bound up in his very nature. Of malice he had none. He was not devoid of ambition, but he had none of the vulgar arts of self-seeking, and the distinctions which came to him so often came unsought. He was easy of access, affable to the humblest

citizen, always open to the suggestion and advice of his friends; never dogmatic or disputatious, never rash or aggressive. In his time of greatest prosperity and power he was modest almost to diffidence. When trial and adversity came, as they did, "not as single spies, but in battalions," he bore deprivation and affliction with a singular fortitude. He suffered with and for the South. A special expedition of marauders was dispatched by Butler, which, emulating the savagery of the British during the revolutionary war in Virginia, destroyed his plantation in his absence.

After the war closed he was made a State prisoner, imprisoned at Fort Pulaski, subjected to coarse and brutal treatment such as no Southern gentleman ever deals out to a negro, and when a beloved child was being borne to the grave, he, who never harmed or wished to harm a human being, was denied the privilege of dropping a tear on the grave or offering comfort to the bereaved mother. He was not sordid. He was too old-fashioned for that. His life at Washington as a senator of great influence was as simple and unostentatious as that of any plain Virginia farmer. With ample opportunities for acquiring wealth in public office, he amassed nothing, and the results of the war

left him poor indeed. He died a poor man—poor in this world's goods, but rich, immeasurably rich, in honor. I knew him long and closely. To know him was to love and venerate him. To know him and to have enjoyed his friendship and confidence till the hour of his death I shall always count as a privilege, and a most precious remembrance.

To the rear of the present hall of the House of Representatives, at Washington, there is a long gallery in which are hung up the portraits of all the illustrious men who have been the Speakers of the body. There you see Henry Clay, Cobb, Andrew Stevenson, Polk, Kerr, Randall, James G. Blaine, and the present able occupant of the chair, Mr. Reed. There, too, you see the youthful, almost boyish, face of Speaker R. M. T. Hunter, of Virginia, ingenuous, open, true, and strong. There is no dark shadow on that brow, no wrinkle written by sorrow and care, but rather the light of hope and of a confident, brave soul. To me, as I wander there and involuntarily turn my gaze upon it, there is hardly anything more touching than to contrast, as I must, this portrait with the saddened, melancholy face which haunts my memory of him who, burdened with private grief

and public calamity, had, like the patriot Grattan, survived the liberties of his country, and who, loving Virginia as he did, was called on to witness and mourn the unspeakable shame of a great State that had given Washington and Jefferson to the country, and by the wisdom and patriotism of her sons had secured to all the colonies freedom and a government of consent, subjugated by arms, plundered, oppressed and scourged by the very communities she had so generously warmed into life. He saw the sad story of Poland's conquest and dismemberment, so eloquently told by the poet Campbell, reproduced in the New World, with fresh horrors and the added element of ingratitude by the conquerors. He saw his mother—Virginia—with bleeding breast, in her hour of agony—

> "Find not a generous friend, a pitying foe,
> Strength in her arms, nor mercy in her woe."

I have said Mr. Hunter was a conservative. No man loved truth more, or was quicker to discern abstract principles; but in action for the State he belonged to the wise school of Edmund Burke. His theory of public duty was the attainment of the best political results under existing conditions and circumstances. He would take the half loaf. His mind was eminently

practical. He did not seek to tear down institutions, but to build up, to preserve what was good, to develop so as to gain a basis for national growth and the constant betterment of the masses. He opposed all class legislation. He was a friend to vested rights and to property and compacts. Peace, conciliation, fair argument, a study of the harmonies of our system—these were the weapons of his intellectual armory. The lessons of history were impressed into the very web and woof of his mind. Had he lived in the days of Jefferson, that great man would have called on him no less than on Madison to employ his fertile mind and ready pen to expound those doctrines of liberty and constitutional freedom which have made a great school of thought, destined to live as long as this republic shall survive.

More than any one whom I have known in civic trusts, Mr. Hunter reminds me of the distinguished men of that revolutionary period —men strong, learned, composed, equal to any trust; who did not derive honor from office, but who dignified and ennobled public station. We have not had the great privilege of looking on the faces of those who built that wonderful edifice of free, constitutional government; but it is something to have known, as you and I have

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done, one who embodied so well in his character, mind and purposes the best traditions of the heroic period of our republic, suggesting, as it does, the fervent, assured hope that the admiration of public virtue, which so deeply animates our people will bear rich fruit in after years, and continue to bring forth in every crisis that may come worthy men to serve the State and uphold the fame of Virginia.

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